

**QUAKER ASPECTS
OF TRUTH**

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Reznikoff

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BY

E. VIPONT BROWN, M.D., LOND.

Christianity without Judaism
Religion without Ecclesiasticism
Worship without Ritual
Faith without Creeds

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DEDICATION

TO MY DEAR SON RALPH

WHO HAD SUCH A GLORIOUS VIEW OF THE TRUTH
OF GOD FROM THE QUAKER POINT OF
VIEW, THAT HE GLADLY GAVE
UP FOR IT ALL THAT
HE HAD TO
GIVE.

*"Peace, Peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of Life."*

PREFACE

EACH of the chapters of this book was an address which was prepared without any view to publication. They were delivered in whole or in part several times before they were written down.

I lay no claim to originality. My mind is like a village pound for the collection of stray thoughts and ideas. I know full well that they did not originally belong to me, but I have appropriated them all and now use them as my own.

Now, therefore, let me do what little I can to disarm the criticisms of those who would accuse me of plagiarism, by pleading guilty.

Surrey Lodge,
Longsight,
Manchester.

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CHAPTER I

THE BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF QUAKERISM

I DO not think that anyone will dispute the fact that the distinguishing and fundamental doctrine of Quakerism is the *Doctrine of the Light Within*. Before ever the Society of Friends was known by that name the early Friends were wont to call themselves "Children of the Light." In so far as it can be said that the Society of Friends was built up on a doctrine, and in large measure it was so, that doctrine was undoubtedly the doctrine of the Light Within ; but I fancy that very few, even of our own members, realise what a profound spiritual revolution this doctrine meant, and for that matter still means, to the majority of Christians brought up within the narrow limits of conventional religious thought.

Quakerism arose in the middle of the seventeenth century, and at that time two doctrines were regarded by the Reformed Churches as indisputable dogmas. There was the doctrine of the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible, and the doctrine of Original Sin. Let us consider these two doctrines separately and see how the doctrine of the Light Within cuts straight across both of them.

The *doctrine of Verbal Inspiration* arose immediately after the Reformation. Curiously enough it was not held by the Reformers themselves. Luther was a Higher Critic of no mean order. He spoke of the Epistle

of James as an "Epistle of Straw," and he fearlessly criticised other parts of Holy Writ which did not fit in with his doctrine of justification by faith. Moreover, I believe that the same was in a large measure true of Swinger, Melancthon, and others. Whilst they all held that the words of God were contained in the Bible, they refused to give to the Bible that most misleading and unscriptural title the "Word of God." But even during the lifetime of these leaders of the Reformation, the Reformed Churches began to forge the fetters which were, ere long, to enslave them. Roman Catholicism had its infallible Church, and Protestantism felt that it must have something equally infallible to oppose to it. So, having pulled down the infallible Church, Protestantism set up in its place the infallible Book, every word of which was regarded as inspired, and therefore literally and eternally true. Not that the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration originated with the Puritans; they took it over ready-made from the Hebrew Scribes, the only difference being that the Puritans added the New Testament to the Old. Now, much as George Fox and the early Friends loved the Bible, and much as they hated the Papacy, they would have nothing infallible, save God Himself. They taught that His Word was not shut up within the covers of the Bible; it was something living and vital; it came not to books, but to men; not to saints alone, but even to sinners if they would but receive it. No outward authority of Book or Church was to be regarded as final; the final authority was the Word of God in the heart of men—the Light Within.

Now it is easy to see how impossible it was for these two doctrines to live together peaceably, and as a matter of fact the antagonism between the doctrine of the Light Within, and the Puritan doctrine of Verbal Inspiration, was the occasion of George Fox's first imprisonment.

It happened in this wise : the Rector of Nottingham was preaching in his parish church, and he took his text from the Second Epistle of Peter—" We have also a more sure word of Testimony, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts." And he went on to say that this " more sure word of Testimony " was the Bible, which had been given by God to man, as the highest authority whereby we must try all doctrines, religions, and opinions. It was such a sermon as one might hear in many a church or chapel to-day. But on this occasion a young man stood up and exclaimed, " No, it is not the Bible ; it is the Spirit of God." And he went on to tell his astonished hearers that the Spirit of God, which inspired the writers of the Scriptures to write what they did, would, in proportion as they had the willingness and the faith to receive it, come into their hearts and inspire them, and lead them into all Truth. It was the Spirit of God, he said, which inspired the writers of the Scriptures, and not the Scriptures themselves, which is, and was, and ever must be, the highest authority whereby we must try all doctrines, religions, and opinions. Now that young man was George Fox, and he paid for his bold assertion of the truth by being cast into a vile dungeon in Nottingham Castle.

No one now will suggest that George Fox underrated the value of Scripture. It was said, during his lifetime, that if the Bible was lost George Fox could easily reproduce it. It was not that he loved the Bible the less, but that he loved God and His Truth the more. God never wished that man should offer up on the altar of Scripture his common sense and reason, and one is thankful that George Fox, thus early in his career, bore such courageous testimony to the Light Within as the final court of appeal.

And now we come to the *doctrine of Original Sin*. This doctrine was no doubt derived from the Genesis "Story of the Fall," and it taught that man is by nature depraved; that every child born into the world is altogether born in sin, and is doomed to everlasting torments in Hell unless conversion takes place. But Fox and the early Friends refused to accept any theological dogma that was not founded on first-hand experience. They knew by observation that human nature is not altogether depraved; that there is something in human nature which responds spontaneously and naturally to all that is good and true and noble. And, however much this Divine part of man's nature may be dwarfed and hidden by disadvantageous circumstances, it is always there, striving to express itself. Thus, George Fox says in his journal: "Now the Lord God opened unto me by His Invisible Power, that every man was enlightened by the Divine Light of Christ, and I saw it shine through all."

Much later on, when George Fox was in America, a certain doctor denied that the Light of Christ was given to all men, and especially instanced the American Indians as being without this Divine Light and Guidance. Whereupon George Fox called to him an unlettered Indian, and asked him whether, when he did wrong, there were not something within him that reproved him for it; and the Indian answered that there was such a thing in him which did so reprove him, and he felt ashamed when he had done wrong or spoken wrong. Thus did George Fox see in every man, however degraded, the Light Within. Thus did he recognise in every human being a veritable Temple of the Holy Ghost.

To illustrate this fundamental doctrine of Quakerism, the early Friends did not always use the metaphor of light. They often spoke of this innate tendency to

goodness as "a seed of God in the heart." Now this metaphor is, in some ways, even more suggestive than the metaphor of light, for it obviously suggests that salvation is achieved, not by a spiritual revolution, such as was looked for by the Puritans, and by the Evangelical Churches of later times, but by a growth in grace ; and this, as a matter of fact, truly represented the religious experience of the Friends. Even their vocabulary was quite different from that of the Puritans. They never spoke of "conversion." They spoke of men and women being "convinced of the truth," and when once this convincement was achieved, the Growth in Grace was assured. So you will see, not only that the Quaker outlook on life was entirely different from that of the Puritan sects, but the consequences were entirely different also. One could scarcely wish for a more striking illustration of this fact, than the contrast between the religious experiences of John Bunyan and those of George Fox. The Spiritual experience of John Bunyan is magnificently portrayed in his immortal allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It is a thrilling story, if not a very heroic one, and its interest is sustained to the very end, for the good reason that, from the very beginning, when Christian starts off with his burden on his back, until the very end when he crosses the River, we are quite uncertain as to what the end will be. Even when Christian is half-way across, we fear he will never land in safety.

But George Fox's experience was of quite another order. The burden of sin which lay so heavily on John Bunyan was never felt by Fox. Distressed he was, but it was not a morbid sense of sin that troubled him ; it was the fact that he had not found the Truth. Moreover, all the professors of religion failed to help him to find it. They were but "blind leaders of the blind." But one day, as he wandered in the fields, he

heard a voice which said to him, "There is One, even Christ Jesus, can speak to thy condition," and when he heard that voice, he tells us, "his heart did leap for joy." Never did he again look to outward authority for the help he needed; he had found within himself the true Teacher which alone could lead him into all Truth—the Light Within. From that day forth this inward illumination grew brighter and brighter, and his whole life was lived in its joy and gladness.

And now let us consider the question whether the doctrine of the Light Within has any *scientific basis*. The men who promulgated the doctrine were certainly not *scientific men* in the usual sense of the word; and yet their methods were scientific, in so far as they fell back upon first-hand experience, and refused to accept any creeds or dogmas that they had not experimentally proved to be true. Instinctively they used the "inductive" method of reasoning. Indeed, I would suggest that the Society of Friends is the only religious organisation which has ever applied the scientific method to theology. Let us see, then, whether their method misled them, or whether it guided them into truth. Is the Light Within a biological fact? Or is it a theological fiction? Is man really altogether born in sin, or is he the highest point reached in a long process of evolution towards perfection?

In order that we may be able to answer this question intelligently, it is necessary for us briefly to study *Evolution*; its history, its meaning, and its method.

HISTORY OF EVOLUTION.

The theory of Evolution was first published to the world in 1859, in Charles Darwin's epoch-making book, *The Origin of Species*. Like so many discoverers, he was anticipated. He was anticipated by the Greeks

two thousand years ago, and later by Lamark, a great French Naturalist. But to Charles Darwin belongs the honour of having, not only defined the meaning of Evolution, but of having shown how it works, and of having brought forward such a mass of convincing evidence in its support that no one now doubts its truth.

His aim was two-fold. To show :

- (1) That *Evolution* is the method of Creation.
- (2) That “ *natural selection* ” is the method of Evolution.

I, myself, did not come into existence until shortly after the publication of Charles Darwin's great work, but I am quite old enough to remember the tremendous flutter in the theological dove-cotes which followed its publication, for when I was a boy the battle was still raging furiously. The Genesis story of Creation had been denied, and the foundations of religion seemed to be shaken. Bishops, Archbishops and Nonconformist divines rushed into the fray, and talked with authority upon subjects of which they knew nothing, showering foul abuse upon Darwin in a manner more worthy of Billingsgate than of dignitaries of the Church. Darwin himself maintained throughout a dignified silence ; but his more belligerent henchman, Thomas Huxley, took up the cudgels for his master. He was a splendid fighter. He struck out right and left, and the dignitaries of the Church went down like ninepins before his sledge-hammer blows. Quakerism, however, remained unmoved, being concerned, not with the creeds and dogmas of the Churches, which might or might not be true, but with the Truth itself. The early Friends called themselves Friends of Truth. From the very first they had set aside the doctrines of Verbal Inspiration, and Original Sin, both of which had been rendered utterly

untenable by Charles Darwin's Discovery, and they had pinned their faith upon the doctrine of the Light Within. This doctrine was certainly not shaken by Darwin's great discovery. On the contrary, as we shall presently see, Darwin's theory of Evolution gives us the biological explanation of the Light Within, tracing for us its origin and its development.

MEANING OF EVOLUTION.

And now let us consider what Evolution means. Evolution means "ordered change." It means that the complex forms of life, the animals and plants such as those we see around us, did not suddenly spring into existence as now we know them by a special act of creation, but were evolved from lower and simpler forms of life. The earliest form of life was probably a simple free swimming cell (a flagellate), so small as to be invisible to the naked eye, if there had been any naked eye to see it : a tiny speck of jelly-like substance (protoplasm), that lived, and moved, and divided so as to form other cells like the parent. How this first cell came into existence we do not know. Judging by analogy, however, it does not seem likely that it came into existence by a special creation. It seems much more probable that it came as the result of a combination and organisation of chemical substances, under the influence of physical forces, such as light, heat, electricity, radio-activity and the like—conditions such as might conceivably be reproduced in the laboratory. When the earth had cooled sufficiently to make it possible for life to exist, chemical substances must have been full of nascent energy, and a living cell may have been the result ; nor is it difficult to believe that something of the sort might happen again if the conditions could be reproduced. But we had best confess our ignorance ; we do not know how it came. This much, however, seems certain, that from this

simple cell or cells, all higher and more complex forms of life slowly evolved.

And now let us consider the *Method of Evolution*. Evolution works by "*Natural Selection*." There are two factors in Natural Selection, Heredity and Variation. By *Heredity* we mean that the offspring is like the parent. By *Variation* we mean that the offspring is not exactly like the parent.

I cannot give you a better illustration of Heredity than the fact that human infants are born of human parents. But though a child takes after father, or mother, as the case may be, it is not exactly like either father or mother ; nor is it exactly a cross between the two. The child has an individuality of its own, and that individuality is Variation. Now the Law of Natural Selection, or, as it was named by Herbert Spencer, the "*Law of the Survival of the Fittest*," says, that any variation that is favourable to the organism will help the organism to survive, so that this Variation is likely to be handed on by Heredity to the next generation ; whilst any Variation which is unfavourable to the organism, will tend to prevent its Survival, so that this Variation is less likely to be handed on by Heredity to the next generation. Let us take an extreme example of an unfavourable Variation, and consider the case of a child born with hare-lip and cleft palate. This hideous deformity prevents the child sucking, and therefore it will be very difficult to rear. It is exceedingly unlikely that such a child will ever have children to whom the deformity would be handed on. On the other hand, favourable variations in the direction of health, strength, beauty and intelligence, will help the child to survive, so that these variations are much more likely to be handed on by Heredity to the next generation.

Darwin himself never discussed the ethics of Natural Selection, but popular imagination saw nothing in his

teaching but "Nature, red in tooth and claw." Terrified clergymen, and old women of both sexes, thought that the Law of the Survival of the Fittest meant a ruthless struggle for existence, in which the weak went to the wall, and brute force reigned supreme. But Darwin never taught this, and it is now known to be far otherwise. If the Law of the Survival of the Fittest had really meant the supremacy of brute force, and the survival of the physically strongest, then would the world have been peopled by the huge monsters whose ugly remains are to be found in our museums—the mammoth, the ichthyosaurus and the like. They, and not ourselves, would have inherited the earth. But brute force was not the last word of Evolution. The higher we ascend the animal scale, the more do intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities enter in as survival factors, and as these assert themselves, the importance of brute force sinks into insignificance. Thus, for example, intelligence must soon have assumed importance as a Survival factor. It is easy to see how every variation in the direction of greater intelligence would enable its possessor better to obtain sustenance; better to defend itself against its many enemies; and better to adapt itself to its environment. And thus intelligence soon assumed the important position as a survival factor, which it still holds to-day. But important as intelligence is, and ever must be, its supremacy was soon challenged. Moral and Spiritual qualities came to the fore as survival factors and became even more important than intelligence. Thus, amongst all the higher forms of animal life, one of the most important survival factors is the love of offspring. The survival of the lower forms of animal life is provided for by the enormous number of offspring produced. Worms and fishes, for example, will produce millions of eggs. But the higher we ascend the animal scale, the fewer are the offspring; and when

we come to the birds, parental love becomes of enormous importance. Any species of bird that neglected its young would soon become extinct. Think for a moment of the enormous amount of loving care that is needed to rear a brood of little birds. Even before the eggs are laid the nest has to be built and a comfortable home prepared. Then, when the eggs are laid, the mother bird has to sit on the eggs, whilst the father bird fends for the two ; and sometimes the father bird will take his place on the eggs, in order to give the mother bird a change. And even when the little ones are hatched out, a vast amount of loving care is still needed in order to rear them. Now all this means self-sacrifice. Moreover, every variation in the direction of less self-sacrifice, less love, a lower sense of parental responsibility, will be to the disadvantage of the offspring, so that this variation is not likely to be handed on by heredity to the next generation. But any variation in the direction of more love will be to the advantage of the offspring, so that this variation is much more likely to be handed on to the next generation. And what is true of the birds, is still more true of the mammals. Take, for example, the domestic cat ; what a splendid mother she makes ! No sacrifice seems too great for her to make on behalf of her kittens. She will even rush into a burning house to rescue them. But although the cat's self-sacrifice is almost unlimited in degree, it is strictly limited in time. Before long, the kittens are old enough to fend for themselves, and then the cat's love for them is apt to change to green-eyed jealousy. And the same is in large measure true of all mammals until you come to Man. And here, as we should expect from his far higher evolution, a far greater degree of self-sacrifice is demanded from him. Take, for example, a child three years old. How entirely dependent he is on the loving care of his parents ! Compare him with a horse three years old ; almost ready

to work. At first all the advantage seems to be on the side of the horse. But wait a few years and you will see the boy riding the horse. Thanks to parental self-sacrifice, the boy is on top and the horse is underneath.

Indeed, of all the mammals, man is the one in whom parental love is most important as a survival factor. The wonderful survival of the Jews has been largely due to their loving care of their children. For three thousand years, whilst the great military empires of the world have successively risen and then rotted in decay, the Jew has survived. And he is likely still to survive, for the infantile mortality in Cheetham Hill—the district in Manchester where the poor Jews live—is only half what it is in Ancoats, where the poor Christians live. So “Love is the fulfilling of the law”—even the Law of the Survival of the Fittest.

Another moral and intellectual faculty which early entered into Evolution as a survival factor, was *co-operation for mutual help* and protection. This subject has been very admirably and thoroughly worked out by that excellent biologist, Prince Kropotkin, in his little book entitled *Mutual Aid*. He shows very clearly that the Law of the Survival of the Fittest does not mean a relentless struggle for existence: “Every man for himself, and the Devil take the hindermost.” On the contrary, willingness to co-operate for mutual help and protection, and willingness to sacrifice individual advantage for the common weal, soon became an important survival factor. Thus, in those humble creatures, the *Ants and Bees*, this co-operation is very marked, and is often associated with striking self-sacrifice, as may be well seen, when an ant-hill catches fire, and the Ants return to perish in the flames, in their efforts to save the larvæ. Then again, *birds* will nest together for mutual help and protection, and by their

co-operation little birds are able to defy the fiercest hawks. Moreover, in the migration of birds, we see a most striking illustration of this co-operation for mutual aid. And what is true of the birds, is still more true of the *mammals*. Indeed, this willingness to co-operate and to sacrifice individual advantage for the common weal, becomes more and more marked as Evolution proceeds. It is a great mistake to assume, as is so often done, that altruism and self-sacrifice came into the world with mankind. Long before man assumed the erect posture and became man as now we know him, parents sacrificed themselves for their little ones. The strong sacrificed themselves for the weak. Man has behind him a long history of social instincts and moral standards which ever tended to rise to higher and nobler levels as Evolution proceeded. Unselfish service and loving self-sacrifice are bred in his bones, and "What is bred in the bone comes out in the flesh." As Kropotkin truly says, it would be easier for man to renounce the erect posture and to go once more on all fours than for him to throw overboard his moral standards, for his moral standards are far more deeply rooted in the past. Do not imagine for one moment that man is naturally a selfish animal. *The savage*, though not perhaps the noble personality of Rousseau's imagination, is anything but selfish. He will fight the members of another tribe but not those of his own. When he finds food, he will always share it. If no one is in sight, he will climb up a rock or tree, and shout before partaking of the food alone. Indeed, there is no doubt that the primitive form of society was Communism. To me the most hopeful thing about our *modern competitive system* (and remember that it *is* modern), is that it is absolutely contrary to the general trend of Evolution, and therefore it cannot be permanent. It is a consequence of artificial circumstances ; of an environment which is absolutely

unnatural. Yet, in spite of unnatural surroundings, nature constantly re-asserts herself. This is most often seen amongst the poor, whose kindly generosity so often amazes us. Their lives are, in many ways, more natural than our own ; and their dependence on mutual aid, though no more real, is far more obvious. When the breadwinner falls ill, or out of work, the family would "go under " were it not for the kindly help of their neighbours. But even among the very rich, Nature not unfrequently asserts herself, and we see revealed that spontaneous generosity, which she meant to have been the unvarying routine of our lives. It is really man's selfishness that should surprise us ; not his generosity. His generosity is natural ; his selfishness artificial.

One of the most striking things in the *teaching of Jesus* is His marvellous faith in human nature. His religion is founded on the assumption that human nature is good ; that man's natural instincts are true and trustworthy. "Why judge ye not of yourselves what is right?" He asks. And again, "Which of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" He takes it for granted that, if left to himself, man will do the kindly and generous thing. Indeed, His religion is a religion of natural and spontaneous benevolence, as opposed to the religion of conventional piety, by which He was surrounded, and by which we are equally surrounded. The Good Samaritan was not a religious man in the ordinary sense of the word. To the Jew, he was far worse than an infidel. But he did the right thing, simply because he followed the natural impulse towards kindness and generous benevolence ; and that, notwithstanding the fact that the wounded man was an enemy of his country. The priest and the Levite were religious men, and they did

the wrong thing, because they allowed themselves to be guided by a conventional sense of religious duty. They had their religious duties to perform at the Temple, and God must come first, so the claims of humanity were put on one side.

Then again, the father of the prodigal was not a pious person. Far otherwise—or he would never have received his son as he did. He was simply a man as God made him; and because he was so human, so natural, so humane, Christ held him up to us as the Revelation of God our Heavenly Father.

“We are all so truly made,
If only to our making we were true.”

Of course, we must not ignore the fact that there are lower instincts and baser passions which also try to express themselves, but the Light Within enables us to discriminate between the higher and the lower, and, thanks to its beneficent influence, “We needs must love the highest when we see it.”

Now, all this means that the Light Within leads men to obey far higher standards of morality than the conventional standards of the pew, and the pulpit. This is why so many professing Atheists and Agnostics have both preached and practised far higher standards than those of the Churches. Thus, Tom Paine set forth his gospel in these words: “The world is my paradise; every man is my brother; to do good is my religion.” Nor am I aware that the Gospel of our Lord and Master has ever been summarised better. When men have thrown overboard conventional piety, which is so often mistaken for religion, if they are honest and sincere, they fall back upon the only thing they can fall back upon, the Light Within, or, as Friends so often call it, “the witness for Truth in the heart.” This, when faithfully followed, has never yet led men wrong; whilst conventional

piety has never yet led men right. It will, to be sure, follow in the paths of righteousness, but only when public opinion has proved that further opposition is hopeless. The Institutions popularly known as "The Churches," have always opposed every scientific approach towards Truth, from the days of Galileo to those of Darwin; and they have always opposed Social Reform, from the days of "The Peasant Revolt" to the days of the "Conscientious Objectors." The great reformers and prophets have all been followers of the Light Within, while their most bitter opponents have always been the followers of conventional piety.

It is safe, therefore, to say that science and experience alike teach us that the Light Within is not a theological dogma; it is a biological fact. Science has traced its evolution, and experience has proved its value. Moreover, I have no hesitation in saying, that, because the doctrine of the Light Within is a biological fact, the *religions of the future are certain to be forms of Quakerism*, modified so as to adapt themselves to the varying needs of mankind.

In Kropotkin's little book, to which I have already alluded, he shows how, in the mediæval cities, miracles of Art and Literature were produced by mutual aid, rather than by competition. The Guilds of the Craftsmen ruled out selfish individualism. But the system broke down because the co-operation was too limited in its scope. It did not include the surrounding peasantry or the neighbouring towns, and so the co-operation of the city had to give place to a larger unit, that of the nation. In this larger unit the Art was, on the whole, far less noble, because initiative was crushed by despotism. Art and Literature must have freedom for their growth and development. But this national unit, too, is breaking down, and that for the same reason: the co-operative unit is not wide

enough. Civilisation is far too complex for any co-operative unit to be permanent that is not international. The Kingdom of Heaven must be world-wide, or it cannot endure.

But I can imagine someone objecting that the Light Within is a moral, rather than a Spiritual faculty ; and that morality, as such, is far too cold and uninspiring a thing to live by. It may be said that in my biological survey I have traced the origin and development of moral standards, and have left religion unaccounted for. Now let me confess that I have been painfully conscious of this criticism during the preparation of my address, and I trust that, for this very reason, I shall be the better able to meet it. Let me begin by saying that the religious instinct is innate in man. But, unlike the moral instinct, I do not think that it can be traced back beyond man. Man has been defined as an "incorrigibly religious animal." All peoples, however primitive, seem to have had their religions, and a great deal of work has recently been done, in the direction of tracing these religions to their source. But this I must leave, as it is outside the scope of biology. For the most part, however, pagan religions never realised any connection between religion and morality ; the two things were as wide apart as the Poles. In Greece, we look back upon Socrates, Plato and Euripides as great religious men ; but they were not so regarded by the Greeks. The men whom they regarded as religious were the priests, whose office was supposed to bring them into touch with the gods. These priests may, or may not, have lived moral lives, but their religion imposed no obligation on them to do so. The gods whom they worshipped were not moral, and therefore were not likely to impose high moral standards upon their worshippers. Religion consisted of certain rites and ceremonies which had to be performed ; especially of sacrifices which had to be

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offered to the gods ; it was quite unconcerned with morality. And what was true of Greek religion, was still more true of Semitic Baal-worship. It was a form of nature-worship, and its rites were always associated with gross immorality. But the Hebrews, by a miracle of spiritual insight, realised that God is the Author and Being of the Moral law, which we have seen unfolding itself in the process of Evolution. However crude the early Hebrew ideas of God may have been—and they were very crude indeed—they seem to have realised, almost from the first, that God is righteous, and that He demands righteousness from those who seek to serve Him. For this great conception of the righteousness of God, and for the closely allied conception of Monotheism, the world owes an incalculable debt of gratitude to the Hebrew race. Now we all know that the Jews believed their laws to have been received direct from God, and originally written by Him on tables of stone. And of a truth, the Hebrews had good reason to be proud of their legislation. Our legislation is nothing to be proud of. At best it is but the record of the lowest standard of morality which public opinion will tolerate. But the enthusiasm of the Hebrew prophets for righteousness was so intense, that it actually succeeded in impressing itself indelibly upon Hebrew legislation. Great and noble as the achievement proved to be however, it did not suffice to keep the people from falling into sin. By all the prophets Israel is condemned for her failure to live up to the high standards of her legal code ; until Jeremiah, despairing of his fellow-countrymen, ever living up to any outward code of laws, proclaimed *the New Covenant*. “ A New Covenant will I make with the House of Israel, and the house of Judah. Not according to the Covenant which I made with their fathers—which Covenant they brake. But this is the Covenant which I will make—after those days saith the

Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people ; and they shall no longer say each to his brother, ' know the Lord,' for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest." Here then, in the seventh century before Christ, we find the doctrine of the Light Within, proclaimed by the greatest of the prophets of Israel. Does anyone suggest that this is cold morality ? Is it not full of religious fire and inspiration ? It is true enough that the moral law is cold and uninspiring when set forth in the written pages of a legal code ; but when we realise that the moral law which we find written in our hearts is the very Nature of God trying to express itself in our lives, then surely it becomes full of life and inspiration. It becomes for us the only possible religion—the Power of God unto Salvation.

And now let us consider for a moment what an optimistic view of life is given by the doctrine of the Light Within. I well remember some years ago hearing one of our leading Nonconformist ministers saying that he had little hope for the future, " human nature being what it is." No doubt he regarded human nature as being depraved ; but it is not human nature that is at fault ; we have no right to thus throw the blame on God Almighty. As Jesus held a sweet babe in His arms, He said " Whosoever shall receive one of these little ones in My Name receiveth Me," and if this meant anything at all, it meant that Jesus saw in every little child a potential Saviour. And Jesus was right. Human nature is full of the most glorious possibilities ; such depravity as there is—and God knows there is plenty—is due, not to human nature, but to human institutions, such, for example, as the capitalist system under which we live, and which seems to have for its object the crushing of all idealism out of life, and the abolition of every motive

which is not mercenary. If every child had an education worthy of the name—a training well designed to bring out all that is best and noblest—and if every man and woman had opportunity to live a full human life; a life in which each personality could find full expression; then every craft would be an art; every craftsman would be an artist; all work would be worship, and all worship would be joyous praise and thanksgiving to God.

And now let me leave the firm ground of Science and History, and let me wander for a moment into the realms of pure speculation. Probably all of us have at times asked ourselves the question: "What am I here for? What is the object of my life?" Even conventional piety suggests that question! But let us look far further ahead and ask ourselves the question: "What is the *ultimate* object of life? For what purpose was this marvellous process of Evolution begun? What is to be its final goal?" To this great question it would indeed be presumptuous to give a dogmatic answer; but to me it appears not unreasonable to suppose that the ultimate object may be to evolve an intelligent human race which shall be able to appreciate the Divine character; to co-operate with God in the fulfilment of His purposes; and to enjoy perfect communion with our Heavenly Father. Moreover, when we remember that this world is but a tiny planet circling round the sun, and that the sun is but one of millions of suns, most of which probably have planets circling round them—planets more or less resembling our own—is it not conceivable that, on some other world than ours, men may already be enjoying this perfect fellowship with God in perfect harmony with His creation? But, however that may be, many of us must have known those who seem to have come very near to this ideal. Some have been taken from us in old age, and we suspect that the ideal has been achieved

by a life-long struggle. Others have been taken from us in younger life, and their bright and sunny nature seemed to us, from the first, to be almost unclouded by selfishness and sin. And surely, all this makes it not unreasonable to believe that, in the distant future, the ideal will be achieved, not by one here and another there, but by the whole Family of God.

CHAPTER II

REVOLUTIONARY CHRISTIANITY

WE are so accustomed to seeing pictures and statues representing a crowned and richly bejewelled Jesus, held in the arms of a crowned and richly bejewelled Madonna, that we may well find it difficult to visualise what the reality must have been—a poorly-clad peasant girl holding to her breast a poorly-clad Infant. And those who worship the Jesus of the imagination, much as two thousand years ago men worshipped the image of Diana fallen down from heaven, are regarded as sane men of sound views. Whilst those who have seen and loved the real Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth, Who showed to men a way of salvation which was no mere trick of theologians and priests, but a new way of life which could and would solve all our social and international problems and create a Kingdom of Heaven on earth, these men are regarded as cranks and heretics. And in war-time they are regarded by their fellow citizens as dangerous criminals and are treated accordingly.

But surely the way of the Churches, and of “practical men,” has not proved so successful that we can afford thus to dismiss the Way of Christ as impracticable and absurd !

It is impossible to read the synoptic Gospels with an unprejudiced mind without recognising the fact that the Gospel preached by Jesus was not only a gospel to the poor, but a gospel of the poor.

From earliest childhood Jesus knew well what poverty meant. He had not a "guarded education." He knew what it was to play at weddings and funerals with the other village children in the market place at Nazareth. He knew the value of a silver coin to a poor peasant woman. He knew how awkward it was to have an unexpected visitor late at night, and to have nothing for him to eat.

But the working classes of that day were no more contented with their lot than are those of our own. Even then they saw and felt the injustice of the unequal distribution of wealth, and in the "Magnificat" we find the expectant mother of our Lord giving expression to the hopes she entertained of the great revolution her Child would bring about. He was to "scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts." He was to "pull down the mighty from their seats and exalt those of low degree"; He was to "fill the hungry with good things and send the rich empty away." Such was the pre-natal programme of the Gospel.

Even before His Mission began, Jesus recognised that the power to get riches, and so to dominate our fellow men, is the gift of Satan. It was Satan who said "All these things will I give Thee, and the power of them." Thus did He see clearly that the acquisitive faculty and the power to rule are alike evil. The Gift of God is the power of service.

Then again, at the beginning of His Ministry, Jesus adopted the glorious words of the Trito-Isaiah to set forth the ends that He had in view: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor, to proclaim release to the captive, the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." One could scarcely wish for a more democratic programme. Moreover, it is very striking

that Our Lord left out the closing words of the sentence, "the day of vengeance of our God." That was no part of His Mission.

I believe that most scholars agree that in Luke we have the original version of the Beatitudes, and these breathe the very spirit of social revolution: "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom; Blessed are ye that hunger for ye shall be filled; Blessed are ye that weep now for ye shall laugh"; and they are accompanied by corresponding woes, carefully omitted by the more cautious and ecclesiastical writer of Matthew: "Woe unto you Rich, for ye have received your consolation; Woe unto you that are full now, for ye shall hunger; Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep." Not that material possessions are wrong in themselves; but material possessions are only "wealth," in any true sense of the word, so long as they enable us to live fuller lives, widening our interests and deepening our sympathies. But a point is soon reached when material possessions tend to narrow our lives by limiting the range of our interests and our sympathies. Then they become, not wealth, but "illth." This point is well illustrated in the story of the Rich Fool; and, better still perhaps, in the still more terrible story of Dives and Lazarus. It did not need a great war to convince Jesus of the evils of commercial greed and selfishness. His clear spiritual insight revealed to Him the soul destroying influence of money. Christ's antagonism to riches was not due to blind prejudice; nor was it due to asceticism. He was even less ascetic than were His enemies, who accused Him of being "a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber." He must have been the most congenial of companions; the life and soul of every social gathering He attended. Far from undervaluing material things, it is evident that He enjoyed them to the full. The enjoyment of material things is perfectly legitimate, so long as it tends to increase

fellowship and to make men more at one. Christ's hatred of riches was due to the fact that they inevitably create social barriers between man and his fellow men. Christ's Ideal was a Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, in which the Universal Fatherhood of God and the Universal Brotherhood of Man should be fully realised in the life of every citizen. Thus anything like money that tended to make social distinctions was to Christ anathema. Christ's *bête noir* was snobbery; whether snobbery of money or snobbery of birth, or religious snobbery. He was extraordinarily tender in His dealings with the sinner, but He knew no mercy in His dealings with the snob. Think, for example, of His fierce denunciations of the Pharisees, whose chief fault was that they were very superior persons. Not only were they very comfortably off, but they felt a comforting assurance that they were properly saved.

A very good illustration of the reason why Christ hated riches may be found in the interesting story of the rich young ruler. Christ and His little band of disciples—the little company which was to form the nucleus of the Kingdom of Universal Brotherhood—were walking along the road, when a well-dressed young man ran after them and kneeling down, asked the question, "What must I do that I may inherit Eternal Life?" Now the idea of a life beyond the grave was a comparatively new one and had all the interest of a new theological doctrine. Indeed, the older and more orthodox sect of the Sadducees still refused to accept it. But it was not the life beyond the grave that chiefly interested Jesus. The Kingdom that He was preaching was in the Here and the Now. So He told the young man, not without impatience, to keep the Commandments; not to murder; not to steal; not to commit adultery; not to lie. But the young man was in earnest, and refused to be snubbed. "All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?"

And Jesus, looking into his earnest young face, loved him. He would gladly have had him join their little company, but He saw only too well that if he had brought all his wealth with him social distinctions must inevitably have arisen. So He told Him, "Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and then come and follow Me." And the rich young ruler did what you and I would have done under the circumstances. Or perhaps it would be more honest to say that he did what you and I have done ; he made "the Great Refusal." Then, as he went away sorrowful, Jesus told His disciples that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom. Theologians have performed miracles of exegesis to get the rich man into Heaven. They, like the rich ruler, are chiefly interested in a Heaven beyond the grave. So they have turned the camel into a cable, and the needle's eye into an archway in Jerusalem. But there is one thing that even scholars cannot do, and that is to make a Kingdom of Universal Brotherhood compatible with unequal distribution of wealth. What would we think of a family in which one child got the best of everything, while another child lived on cheese-parings ? Now, Christ's Ideal was a Kingdom of Heaven in which the whole human race should live as one family and share and share alike. Any inequality must be to the advantage of the weak.

The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard shows us that even if the wage system worked fairly and those who worked the hardest were given most, it would still be utterly un-Christian. Those who came at the eleventh hour were paid the penny, not because they had earned it, but because they needed it. In a family the needs of the children are provided for, regardless of their earning capacity ; and so in the Kingdom men's needs must be provided for, so that they may live as free from anxious thought as the birds of the air or the

lilies of the field. Thus only can real freedom be obtained. Thus only can men be set free from the worship of mammon to serve the living God.

The amusing story of the Unjust Steward may also serve to illustrate Christ's attitude towards riches, and towards those who possess them. We can imagine how, as He was teaching the poor peasants, He noticed the rich Pharisees looking on with a supercilious smile. So Christ addressed Himself to them and, with His ironical wit, turned the laugh against them. He told the story of an incident which might very well have happened in their immediate neighbourhood. A rich landowner had a steward who had been shamelessly exploiting the poor tenants and pocketing the money. At last his exploitations became so flagrant that his master was obliged to interfere and dismiss him. But now, in his extremity, the clever rogue made friends with the tenants by exploiting his master to *their* advantage, so that when he was out of work he could "sponge" upon these very men whom he had been so shamelessly robbing. On hearing of what had happened, his master, an easy-going Oriental, saw only the funny side of the incident and commended the steward for the worldly wisdom of his roguery. Then Jesus applied the story to the Pharisees. They, just as much as the unjust steward, had been exploiting the poor peasants; but when the Kingdom was established and the poor had their rights, they, the Pharisees, would be out of work! There could be no use for them in The Kingdom of Universal Brotherhood! They would, therefore, be well advised to do as the unjust steward, and use their ill-gotten gains, "the mammon of unrighteousness," to make friends with the poor peasants, instead of treating them with contempt.

But it was not in the ideals of the social revolution that Christ most showed His originality. The conception

of a Kingdom of God in which the poor should have their rights, and the widows and fatherless should have full justice done them, had been implicit and often explicit, in the teachings of the prophets of Israel for eight hundred years, and in theory the Pharisees accepted it. What was most original in the teaching of Jesus was the way in which the revolution was to be brought about. It was to be accomplished by meeting all wrong and injustice with active good will and benevolence. "If a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also." "If a man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." "If a man compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

The saying of Jesus concerning the second mile is made all the more striking when we remember that the men who imposed compulsory service were the Romans, the enemies of the nation. Thus by love were the Jews to conquer their conquerors !

Some years ago, a Hindu Professor of Philosophy said to me, "Christianity is an Oriental religion, and you Western nations utterly fail to understand it. If you would only send us the Gospel without the European we should take to it like fish to water. Thus when Jesus tells you to turn the other cheek, to give to every thief and to lend to every would-be borrower, you explain it all away as metaphor ; but *that* was the bread and butter of His teaching. When however Jesus does speak in the language of metaphor, as when He says that He gives His life a ransom for many, you take it literally and convert it into a dogma of the Church."

And truly my Hindu friend was right. Centuries of battling against the material forces of Nature has made us Western nations grossly materialistic. Materialism is bred in our bones. The ethics of our Western religion might be summed up in one word, *Honesty*. The greatest flight of our imagination rarely soars higher than

twenty shillings to the pound. But honesty is never mentioned in the Gospel except as part of the teaching of John the Baptist. When we have to give to thieves and share our last crust with the undeserving, honesty is not worth the mention. No wonder Jesus said, "Of those that are born of woman there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist ; yet he that is least in the Kingdom is greater than he."

When speaking to a brother of mine, recently returned from Australia, he described to me the communistic practices of the aboriginal savages. "Then what do the missionaries teach them ?" I asked. "The sacredness of private property," was his answer !

That the disciples fully understood the social implications of our Lord's teaching is well shown by the fact that the first thing they did when they got to work, was to form themselves into a communism. It is often said that the communism was not a success ; but there is not a word in the Acts of the Apostles to suggest that it was not, and it is spoken of with evident approbation. It was part, and an essential part, of their scheme for the inauguration of the Kingdom of Heaven.

A Kingdom of Universal Brotherhood is bound to be communistic. But this does not necessarily mean that the Communism of the Kingdom will be exactly the same thing as the communism of the savage and that the human race will get back to exactly the same position as that from which it started. The progress of the human race is not in a circle ; it is in a spiral. Many of us no doubt have been through the circular tunnels in Switzerland. The train rushes into a tunnel and, after some time, emerges in what might appear to be exactly the same place. But it is not really the same place. It has come out at a far higher level, with wider views and more extensive horizon. And so it is with human progress. The race has rushed into a tunnel of selfish

greed and egoism; and when it emerges, as emerge it must, it will be found that it has not been in the tunnel for nothing. The communism which was once a mere instinct, will have become intelligent and consciously Divine.

The same process can often be recognised in the progress of the individual. The very little child is unconscious of the Ego, and speaks of itself in the third person. Soon, however, this stage passes off, and the child becomes an appalling egoist. Then begins the true battle of life, the fight against self and selfishness. Those who succeed best in defeating the Ego and eliminating it from their lives, are the true saints of the earth. But they have not got back to exactly the same position as that from which they started, or they would indeed have fought in vain. The saint is child-like, but he is not childish. The unselfishness of the saint is intelligent and divine. He has come out of the tunnel at a far higher level, with wider views and more extensive horizon.

In those early communistic days, the members of the Apostolic Church did not call their religion "Christianity." That was a nickname coined at Antioch. The name that they gave to their religion was "*The Way*." It was a new way of life—a new way of conquering enemies—a new way of overcoming difficulties—a new way of getting what is wanted.

Since the War I find that I have grown more and more impatient with the good, kindly folk who so constantly tell us that "We are all working for the same end," as though that were all that mattered. Of course we are all working for the same end. Every man of good-will wants a Kingdom of God, and as at least ninety per cent. of our fellow men are men of good-will, it stands to reason that we are all working for the same end. But the thing that matters is not the end in view,

but "*The Way*." If we are on the wrong road, we shall never reach our destination.

The Pharisees wanted a Kingdom of God every bit as much as Christ did. Their literature is full of this desire. But they chose the way of the Sword, and Christ told them that it was the broad way leading to destruction. Forty years afterwards His words were verified.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read a great deal concerning "*The Way*," and those who are "*of the Way*." Thus we are told how Saul of Tarsus went to Damascus, "that he might bring all who were of the Way bound to Jerusalem." But, fortunately, before he started on his journey, he himself had seen something of "*The Way*." He had been present at the stoning of Stephen, and had heard him pray for his persecutors, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." If Stephen had railed upon those who stoned him, it would not have troubled Saul. He was quite accustomed to that kind of thing. But this was something quite new to him, and he could not get it out of his mind. Moreover he had seen Stephen's face, "as it had been the face of an angel," and had heard him exclaim, "Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." And as Saul rode to Damascus, he too had a vision of the Lord Jesus. Thus through the influence of the dead Stephen, Saul was converted to this new way of life and became Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

But Paul soon found that the Way of Love aroused the opposition of vested interests of various kinds.

First there was Conventional Piety. Some of those in the Synagogue at Ephesus, "spake evil of the Way," and so strong did their opposition grow, that he was obliged to leave the synagogue, and preach in the school of one Tyrannus. And of late we have heard many echoes of that far-off time. The conventions of respectable piety change but little, whilst the Way of Love is always

unconventional and disconcerting. It is apt to make suggestions that are obviously ill-timed and preposterous. The love of enemies in war-time and the like ! So perhaps those of the Way may still find the most suitable accommodation, not in the synagogue or the Church or Chapel, but in the school of one Tyranus !

Then again, after two years in the school of one Tyranus, the Apostle found himself up against another vested interest—the interest of trade. Once again there was “no small stir concerning the Way.” Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen found that the Way of Love was proving prejudicial to the sale of shrines for the Goddess Diana. At first sight it does not seem quite obvious why the way of the pious people in the Synagogue should not have proved quite as prejudicial to the sale of shrines as the Way of Love. But the Way of Love meant business, and the business of the Way of Love was not compatible with the business of Demetrius. So Demetrius appealed to the trade and the trade appealed to the mob, and the consequence was a great riot, so that Paul had to leave Ephesus.

Again we have heard echoes of those far-off times. The Way of Love is still apt to run counter to the interests of trade, especially such trades as armament firms and the gutter-press, and the mob is at times appealed to. Even our Meeting-house at Mount Street was attacked, which makes me hope that our Quaker Meeting-houses have some spiritual affinity with the school of one Tyranus !

Then, later still, the Way of Love found itself up against another vested interest—the State.

Just at first “those of the Way” looked to the State for protection, and not altogether in vain. Thus, when Paul was defending himself before Felix, he boldly confessed that he served God, after “the Way which they call heresy,” and Felix, not the best of Roman

Governors, "having some knowledge of The Way," and knowing that there was no case in Roman law against Paul, robbed the pious Jews of their quarry.

This, and similar experiences, led the Apostle to say things regarding the powers that be, which sound strangely out of harmony with the teaching of Jesus. And when we remember that the power which Paul believed to be ordained of God was the power of Nero, we shall know which was right, Jesus or Paul.

But soon the State became the greatest persecutor of the Way. When soldiers became converted to the Way of Love, they being unsophisticated, simple-minded men, and not theologians, found that their religion was inconsistent with the profession of arms. How could they seek to conquer their enemies by love, and at the same time be part of a great military machine, whose object it was to conquer by slaughter? So they gladly suffered martyrdom, saying, "I am a Christian and therefore I cannot fight."

Nor was it long before the Way of Love came into collision with the State in a manner which affected, not only those who had become soldiers, but the whole Church. The cult of the Emperor was coming rapidly to the fore, and patriotism was degraded to the level of a State religion. It was made incumbent upon all to offer sacrifice to the State, as personified by the Emperor. We probably all know the picture, "Diana or Christ?" The picture is beautiful, but its title is misleading. The Romans were far too wise to force a foreign cult upon unwilling worshippers. The choice was between the State, as personified by the Emperor, and Christ. It was to the Emperor that the grain of incense had to be offered, and other cults felt no compunction about showing their allegiance in this manner. But those of The Way could not offer to the State that worship and absolute obedience that belongs to God, and God

alone. And thus began those awful persecutions of the Early Church.

And once again, we have heard echoes of those far-off times. Patriotism has again been degraded to the level of a State Religion, and all men have been commanded to offer to the State that absolute obedience which belongs to God alone. Conventional Piety still does not scruple to offer its grain of incense. Why should it not do so? But the Way of Love can no more do it now than it could do it then. Three representative members of our Society were thrown into prison, because we refused to submit our publications to the Censor, and hundreds of young men have suffered in jail with thieves and felons, because they were loyal to Christ's law of Universal Love.

But, in spite of persecution by the State, in spite of the opposition of trade, in spite of the sneers of respectable piety, the Way of Love still prospered, until at last paganism only saved itself from defeat by calling itself "Christianity." When Constantine took the Cross of Christ as a banner to lead his troops to bloody victory over his enemies, he inflicted a defeat upon the Church of Christ, from which it has never recovered. For paganism is not the less pagan, because it calls itself "Christian." To-day we live in a pagan state. We see around us a pagan commercialism; a pagan militarism; a pagan Churchianity; and those who would find the Way of Love are more likely to find it in their own hearts, than by following the directions of those who call themselves Ministers of Christ! Truly in our hearts is the way to Zion.

But although Christianity suffered a severe defeat and has not recovered from it, yet the Way of Love must eventually triumph, for Love is the strongest thing in the Universe. Whenever it has been given a fair chance, it has always succeeded—think of how Patrick

conquered Ireland as it has never been conquered since ! Think of how Francis conquered Italy and half Europe besides ! And think again of how George Fox and his followers conquered England.

That George Fox and the Early Friends did not fully realise all the implications of their gospel I readily acknowledge, but it is marvellous how much they did realise. The Society of Friends which they founded is, in form at least, the most democratic Society the world has ever known. In theory the Society of Friends is a "Theocracy"; but when the God who is worshipped is immanent, not transcendent, a God in the heart of each individual, even though that individual may deny Him, then the Theocracy becomes more democratic than any democracy that has yet been established.

Many of the so-called "peculiarities" of Friends were the implications of their democratic principles applied to the needs of their day. Thus arose "the plain language" which many of us still use in our families.

When Quakerism arose it was customary to use "thee" and "thou" to persons of inferior social position, and to say "you" to persons of social standing. But the early Friends refused to make social distinctions. If all are Children of God, then all are equal in His sight. Therefore they used the plain "thee" and "thou" to all alike.

For the same reason, they refused such titles as "Mr." and "Mrs." and "Sir" which were reserved for persons of social distinction.

For the same reason they refused to doff the hat, remaining covered in the presence of royalty.

But not only did they refuse to make social distinctions; in their religious organisation they refused to make sex distinctions. From the first they recognised the equality of the sexes.

Then again they refused to recognise religious distinctions. No sex and no class has any monopoly of the Light Within. Therefore the Society of Friends has abolished the laity and has put into practice the Universal Priesthood.

Some of the implications which they applied to the needs of the seventeenth century are now useless anachronisms. Regardless of grammar, we now say "you" to rich and poor alike, and regardless of social distinctions, we doff the hat to the "char-lady." What we have to do now is to apply the principles of Universal Brotherhood and Love to the needs of our time just as faithfully and just as fearlessly as the Early Friends applied them to the needs of their own.

Let me, then, make a few suggestions. The Early Friends sought to reform the penal system, but they failed to realise that the whole penal idea is condemned by the doctrine of the Light Within, and by the teaching of Jesus. Not only did Jesus say "Judge not that ye be not judged," but, when He was asked to adjudicate in a particular case, He indignantly replied "Who made Me a Judge or a Divider over you?"

All men of sound mind are in possession of the Light Within, and we shall get the best out of them when, and only when, we appeal to the best that is in them. Now all penal systems appeal, not to the best, but to the worst. They appeal to fear.

Even at school the penal system does not work satisfactorily. When I was at school the spirited boys frequently broke the rules. If they were not found out, they scored. If they were found out the schoolmaster scored, and they took their punishment like men. The boys who never broke the rules were regarded as lacking in sportsmanship, and that not without reason.

A brother of mine who, though not a schoolmaster,

was once placed in the position of superintendent of a large school, refused to punish, putting the boys on their honour to do right. The result was perfect discipline, though the boys did not like it. They much preferred the tyranny of the schoolmaster to the far more despotic tyranny of the conscience ! Of a truth the conscience is the only legitimate tyranny, and it is by far the most irresistible.

But if the punishment of children fails to fulfil any useful purpose, still more so is it with the punishment of adults. In England every man who gets into prison, gets there on an average ten times, proving up to the hilt that our penal system, to put it mildly, is not reformatory ! Man is not good because of the magistrate or the policeman ; he is good because God made him good. There is no need for the so-called " forces of Law and Order." The only force of law and order that ever was, or ever will be, any good, is the force of God's Law of Love in the heart of man. The so-called forces of law and order always have been instruments of tyranny used by the strong to oppress the weak.

Criminals can roughly be divided into two classes, and for neither of them is penal treatment in the least appropriate. There is the class of criminals whom we may speak of as " born criminals," and there is the class whom we may speak of as " manufactured criminals." " Born-criminals " are suffering from feeble-mindedness, or from moral insanity, and to punish them is as foolish as it would be to punish a child because it had a birth-mark. They are suffering from an hereditary disease. Their lives should be made as useful and happy as possible under the circumstances, and they should be carefully segregated so as to render it impossible for them to propagate their species.

The " manufactured criminals " have been made what they are by their surroundings—surroundings

which would have damned us just as certainly as they damned them. They are the unfortunate creatures of circumstances—circumstances over which they have had no control. Moreover, it is well that we more fortunate members of society should remember that we also are creatures of circumstances, and that whatever measure of salvation we have attained is due to circumstances over which we also have had no control. What these, our less fortunate brothers, need, is not punishment, but education. The Light Within is not extinguished. It is only dimmed; and love may kindle it into a flame far brighter than our own.

Before William Tuke founded York Retreat for the Insane, which took place towards the close of the eighteenth century, the treatment of lunatics was conducted on precisely the same lines as is the treatment of criminals to-day. The protection of society was the only thing thought about, whilst the welfare of the lunatic was absolutely ignored. Punishments were then the order of the day for lunatics, just as they are now for criminals. We look back upon those days as days of barbarism, and we think of those who treated the lunatics of those days as being but little saner than the lunatics themselves. The only thing we think of now in the treatment of lunatics is their recovery; or, if that be impossible, the amelioration of their unhappy lot. And the consequence is that society is far better protected under the new *régime* than it was under the old. Now the lunatic and the criminal are first cousins, and I say, without the shadow of a doubt, that when the object of our criminal law is the well-being of the criminal, society will be far better protected than is at present the case. Future generations will look back upon our treatment of criminals much as we look back upon the treatment of lunatics by our forefathers.

Then again the Early Friends stood very firmly for

the freedom of the Gospel Ministry. Indeed, they spoke with such scorn of paid preachers, or "hireling ministers" as they called them, that I used to think them a little wanting in charity. But the War has taught me that it was not really lack of charity; it was clear spiritual insight. They saw that the paid preacher is never free. He is in honour bound to preach what he is paid for preaching. Those who "pay the piper" have a right to choose the tune. That is, in large measure, the explanation of the fact that the Churches have always been ready to throw a cloak of religion over any devilry, however devilish.

But surely this great principle that ministry should be free, is not only applicable to the vocal ministry. All our work should be regarded as ministry, and is prostituted when it is done for money. A man's living ought to be assured to him. Then, and then only, is he a free man; free to do his work for the love of his work and for the love of his fellow-men. Thus, and thus only, can true art be developed. No great art was ever produced for money. The mercenary element kills art. And as the greatest art is the art of living greatly, so great lives can only be lived when the mercenary element has been eliminated from life.

True art is sacramental. It is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. It is the outward expression of the spiritual life. And all work ought to be that, and if it is not capable of being that, there is something seriously wrong with it.

There is a great deal of misunderstanding, even among members of our Society, concerning the true Quaker view of Sacraments. It is often said that Friends take a purely spiritual view of the Sacraments. But Sacraments cannot be spiritual. They must perforce be "outward and visible," and therefore material. And if the inward and spiritual grace does not find outward

expression in material things, it is a selfish indulgence ; a demoralising sentiment.

It was a true instinct that caused the act of worship to be so constantly associated with the sharing of food. The earliest form of sacrifice was the Communal Feast, at which the sacred animal was slain and eaten by the tribesmen. The sharing of the food was the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace of brotherhood. In the Old Testament we find that many of the most striking theophanies were associated with the sharing of food.

For example, we have the Old World story of Abraham entertaining, with Oriental hospitality, three strangers ; and it transpired that One of the three was the God of Israel. Nor is the idea confined to the Old Testament. As we read the Gospels we get the impression that every social meal attended by our Lord became a Sacrament. The Feeding of the Multitude was certainly sacramental, and so was the Last Supper. So also was the meal at Emmaus, when our Lord was made known to the two humble disciples in the breaking of bread. And after the Resurrection the connection between worship and the sharing of food was still maintained in the Early Church. Every evening the " agape " or common meal was held as an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace of brotherhood.

And still, if the inward and spiritual grace be real, it cannot fail to find expression in the sharing of food and of all the good gifts of God.

Far from Quakerism having discarded the Sacraments, it is the most sacramental of all religions. It was not by accident that Quakerism did so much to reform our prisons, to abolish slavery, to revolutionise the treatment of the insane, and to relieve the sufferings of the innocent victims of the Great War. As my wife and

I travelled along the devastated regions of the valley of the Marne, we soon learned to recognise the red-roofed cottages, built by the young men of our Society for the homeless peasants of France. At the call of suffering humanity our young men and maidens went out by hundreds, some never to return ; and there in those red-roofed cottages it was easy to recognise the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace that filled their hearts.

I often feel the need of some word to mean the exact opposite of *Sacrament* ; that is to say " an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual *disgrace*." Perhaps the word " profanement " might serve the purpose. Look, for example, at our slums ; or look at the children who live in them—children born in the image of God, and now stunted and deformed in mind and body. Truly, outward and visible signs of our inward and spiritual disgrace. Or look again at the " War to end war," and at its appalling consequences, physical, moral and spiritual. Or look again at the " Peace to end Peace," with its consequences, scarcely less appalling. Here again we may see the outward and visible signs of our inward and spiritual disgrace. Surely such things condemn our whole social system as utterly un-Christian and ungodly.

What a contrast to the way in which God does things. All the beauty of the world as God made it, is sacramental. God never separates Beauty from Utility as we have done. He never separates the Spiritual from the Material. All are blended into one perfect *Harmony*. Think of the beauty of an apple-orchard in the spring ! Or see it again in the autumn ! Or think again of the loveliness of the wooded stream ; the mountains and the lakes ; the meadows decked with flowers. What are these save the outward and visible signs of the Inward and Spiritual Grace in the heart of God.

CHAPTER III

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY REVIVED

THE first question which naturally suggests itself is this : What was Primitive Christianity ? We know, only too well, what passes current as Christianity nowadays. It consists largely of creeds and dogmas ; of forms and ceremonies ; of outward observances and institutions ; and it seems strangely compatible with slums and with millionaires ; with American cotton rings ; with war ; and with numberless other outrages on humanity. But what was the Christianity of Jesus ?

One of its most striking features was surely its exquisite simplicity.

Its theology was the Universal Fatherhood of God. That, and of course, all that it implied ; but practically nothing more.

Its morality was the Universal Brotherhood of Man. That, and all that that implied, and I need scarcely say that to Jesus it implied a very great deal.

Just as filial love was to be the primary religious duty of the follower of Christ, so fraternal love was to be his primary moral obligation. You will remember how, when Christ was asked which was the greatest Commandment, He answered, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength " ; and then He added, very pertinently, " And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Here we have religion and morality in a nutshell, for religion is the love of God, and morality the love of man. And if the theology and morality of Christ's religion were exquisitely simple, its ritual was, if possible, simpler still ; for the only sacrament which He instituted was a life of love and honour and purity and unselfish service for others. The word *sacrament* is generally defined as meaning " an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," and surely the only trustworthy outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace is a life of holiness ; and many scholars tell us that this is the only sacrament which we can say with confidence was ordained by Jesus.

Thus it was that the new faith filled the old world with wonder and amazement. For it at once proved itself to be a religion full of vitality and power, whilst at the same time it absolutely discarded the whole stock-in-trade of that which had hitherto been regarded as religion. For by far the most characteristic and indispensable features of all the old religions were sacerdotal rites, performed by an official priesthood. But the Christianity of Christ had no sacerdotal ritual, and therefore could have no official priesthood. Christ taught His followers to regard God as an all-loving and propitious Heavenly Father ; and God, being already propitious, needed no propitiatory sacrifice ; and within the pale of such a faith, an official priesthood had no *raison d'être*.

Now, as a matter of fact, during Apostolic times, when the teaching of the Master was still fresh in the memory of His disciples, and when the adherents of the new faith were still, for the most part, simple-minded men of small education, the Christianity of Christendom remained to a large extent identical with the Christianity of Christ. That is to say, it was a brotherhood, without any creed and without any ritual or official priesthood.

Moreover its adherents were held together, not by any exact uniformity of belief or practice, but by their enthusiastic loyalty to their risen Lord and Master. If there were any religious test at all in the new community, it was a test, not of belief, but of character. Soundness of life, not soundness of view, formed their test of faith.

But, alas ! this primitive simplicity could not last. It was doomed ere long to perish.

When a child is born, it comes into the world naked and unashamed, but it is at once clothed according to the fashion of time and place. Thus, an English baby is not clothed exactly like a German baby. Still less is it clothed like a Hindu baby. And a child that is born to-day is not clothed as it would have been a hundred years ago. Even so, Christianity was born into the world in all its exquisite simplicity, but it was at once clothed in accordance with Greek thought and Roman polity. Thus it received a theology which was not Christian, but Greek ; and it received a system of church government which was not Christian, but Roman. And as time went on the clothes were multiplied and their importance exaggerated, until very soon the child itself was lost sight of. The child was lost in the multiplicity of its garments.

It would be difficult to imagine two things more widely separated or more absolutely irrelevant than the Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed ; yet the one was translated into the other in less than three hundred years. In the Sermon on the Mount we see the Christianity of Christ and the consummation of Hebrew Religion. In the Nicene Creed we see a degenerate product of Greek philosophy.

Again, it would be difficult to imagine two things more widely separated or more absolutely irrelevant than the brotherhood of believers who formed the Church

of the first century, and the so-called Catholic Church into which that brotherhood grew. The one was, in a true sense, the Church of Christ on earth. The other was a Roman institution, organised on the model of the Roman Empire.

And now, in order that we may the more fully understand the change that took place, and how it came about, let us consider for a moment the world into which Christianity was born. It was in many ways remarkable, and, in some ways, almost unique. For Christianity came into a world which was under one universal government, and which understood one universal language. The government of the world was Roman, but its language was Greek. I do not of course mean to suggest that everyone spoke Greek. Many different languages were spoken then, just as they are now, but Greek was everywhere understood. Rome had conquered the then known world. But Greece had her revenge, for Greek thought, Greek philosophy, and Greek art, in their turn, conquered Rome.

Just as nowadays the thought of one man may find its expression in a poem, and the thought of another man may find its expression in a machine, so the genius of the Greek mind found its most characteristic expression in art and philosophy, whilst the genius of the Roman mind found its most characteristic expression in laws and institutions. And when the new faith gained adherents from the cultured and ruling classes, its converts did not cease to be Greek philosophers and Roman lawyers because they accepted Christ. And so it came about that Christianity entered the Greek mind a living and potent religion. It came out a theology! And this same Christianity entered the Roman mind a living and potent religion. It came out an institution! And it is all-important for us to remember that whilst the religion was Christian, the theology was not Christian,

it was Greek. And the institution was not Christian, it was Roman.

And thus, in a remarkably short space of time, this Christianity which, as it came from the Master, was characterised by the exquisite simplicity of its theology, and by the entire absence of any sacerdotal rites or official priesthood, evolved a theology far more dogmatic than any which had preceded it, and a sacerdotal system with a priestly hierarchy and a ritual so elaborate as to cast even that of the priesthood of Aaron into the shade.

Now I am quite willing to admit that to say that a theology and an institution are of Pagan rather than Christian origin, is not quite equivalent to saying that they are false. Nor have I any desire to narrow down the inspiration of God so as to bring it all within the limits of Hebrew and Christian revelation. But it does follow from what I have already said that those creeds and institutions which we call Christian have no supreme authority, and are in no way binding upon the loyal follower of Jesus Christ. And I go further and say with Fairbairn, that for any man-made institution to call itself the "Church of Christ," is impiety and impertinence. Christ did not found an institution; still less did He found a sacerdotal system. What He did found was a brotherhood of believers, which He trusted would grow into a world-wide society, in which the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man should be fully realised in the everyday lives of the "citizens of the Kingdom."

Now here let me say, incidentally, that true Christianity has nothing whatever to fear either from scientific investigation or from historical criticism. To be sure the so-called "Christianity" of creeds and ceremonies and institutions has everything to fear. Indeed the scientific and historical spirit of the age has scarcely left

it a leg to stand on. But the Christianity of Christ owes to the historical spirit of the age, a very deep debt of gratitude, for it has almost succeeded in extricating the child from its clothes. Indeed, it is scarcely too much to say that the historical spirit of the age has found once again and restored to the world the historical Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

But that which the historical spirit of the age is now succeeding in doing by a process of slow and painful investigation, was done two hundred and fifty years ago by George Fox, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. He recognised the fact that Christianity could well afford to dispense with everything save Christ, and that it would be infinitely the richer for its loss. His avowed object was to get back to the Christianity of Jesus, and the Early Friends loved to call Quakerism "Primitive Christianity Revived." They abolished all creeds and dogmas and all sacerdotal rites, and the only priesthood they would acknowledge was the Universal Priesthood of all believers.

If they did not recognise that the organisation and sacerdotalism of the official churches were Roman, they at least recognised that they were not Christian, and they opposed them with all their spiritual force.

If they did not recognise in the theological creeds of the churches the influence of Greek thought, they at least recognised the absence of the authority of Christ, and therefore they would have none of them.

Not that I would suggest that George Fox and his companions had no theology. Of course they had a theology. No one can help having a theology; and their theology was, to some extent, the current theology of their day. But whilst the Christianity of Christ must for ever remain unchanging and unchangeable, theology must ever be a changing science. And therefore, to man, a creed can at best only represent a stage in the

evolution of religious thought ; whilst to God it must for ever stand as the record of man's ignorance. Therefore Friends have always refused to limit the Truth of God by creed or dogma, believing that God has still many things to reveal to those who are willing to be taught by Him, and that as yet we do but wade on the shore of the vast ocean of God's Truth, which remains still comparatively unexplored.

Moreover, much of the Truth of God with which theology concerns itself is not only unexplored but unexplorable. For surely it is obvious that God is only knowable just where He comes in contact with human life and human experience.

Someone has truly said that "wise men investigate whilst fools explain." And where investigation is impossible, as, for example, in abstruse metaphysical questions regarding "The Trinity," we shall best show our wisdom by a frank acknowledgment of our ignorance.

And now let us consider the question, What is the difference between religion and theology ? "

A man's religion is his knowledge of God and his relationship to Him.

A man's theology is what he knows, or what he thinks he knows, about God.

There is all the difference in the world between knowing a person or thing, and knowing about that person or thing. For example, the astronomer may know a great deal about the sun. He may know the meaning of the sun spots, the distance of the sun from the earth, and something also of its chemical composition. But his very study of the sun may cause him to forget to rejoice in the sunshine, and happier far is the little child who, in blissful ignorance of all these things, lives joyfully in its warmth and brightness.

Or, to use another simile—the chemist may know a great deal concerning the chemistry of food. He may

know the exact chemical composition of bread and its exact value in the economy of human life. But this knowledge will never serve to nourish him or maintain his life.

Even so, knowledge about Christ, about His relationship to the Father and to that Manifestation of God which we sometimes speak of as the third Person in the Trinity, will never suffice to cleanse the heart from dead works to serve the Living God. No! We must partake of the Bread of Life if our spiritual life is to be maintained; and, if we would know anything of the glorious power of the Gospel, we must live in the Light and Warmth and Gladness of the Sun of Righteousness.

You will remember that in the first chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians he mentions the fact that dissensions had arisen in the Church at Corinth. One said, "I am of Paul"; another, "I of Apollos"; a third, "I of Cephas." Doubtless Paul and Barnabas and Peter had each his own peculiar theological views—each his own particular view of God's Way of Salvation. And their views were not identical; and as each had his own disciples among the Corinthian Christians, dissensions not unnaturally arose. And Paul tells them that before ever he came there he foresaw what was likely to happen, and determined that he would leave his own theological views entirely in the background, and would know nothing amongst them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He knew that the Church could perfectly well afford to dispense with his views, and that the only thing indispensable to Christianity is Christ. And if the Church could afford to dispense with the views of the Apostle Paul, it can surely well afford to dispense with your views and mine.

There is only one thing indispensable to Christianity, and that one thing is Christ. Everything else can go, and Christianity will be the richer for its loss.

And when everything else has gone—when everything has been eliminated from Christianity which is not of Christ—then what is left is Quakerism. The Quaker ideal is Christianity from which all accretions, whether from Hebrew, Greek or Roman sources, have been removed.

I have already told you how George Fox and the Early Friends sought to get back to primitive Christianity. Two hundred and fifty years ago, they modelled their Society upon that which they conceived to have been the constitution of the Early Church of the First Century, and they arranged their meetings to simulate, as closely as possible, the simple gatherings of these Primitive Christians, so that when a modern scholar, Professor McGiffert, drew an historical picture of these meetings of the Early Church, he described, without knowing it, a Quaker's meeting.

And how wise these Early Friends were in thus going back to Primitive Christianity ; for if we wished to drink of the Irwell, we should do well to seek for it near its source, ere ever it had become a polluted stream. And what is true of the river Irwell is equally true of the River of Life.

Now, we are too apt to think of Quakerism as a miscellaneous collection of religious opinions and practices, having no particular connection with one another, save only that they were held by George Fox and the Early Friends. But any such impression of Quakerism is absolutely erroneous. Quakerism consists of a special position from which the Truth of God is seen, and it is logically impossible to see and accept truth from this point of view, without accepting, practically, the whole of Quakerism.

The difference between the Quaker view of truth and that adopted by most of the other religious denominations is very similar to, if not identical with, the

difference between the new views regarding education and the old. We all know how, in days gone by, education was regarded as the inculcation of knowledge. The old system of education was founded on the dictum, "Knowledge is Power." The process was not unlike that of packing a trunk. The best teacher was the one who could pack most facts, or what were supposed to be the facts at that particular time, into the mind of his pupil ; and the logical end of this system of education was well represented in a youth whose proud parents informed a relative of mine, that he had passed his sixth standard, and knew all that there was to be known. His education was indeed, complete. The end of education had been attained.

But how different is the modern view of education ! Even those of us who are not educational experts, fully appreciate the enormous change which has taken place. Thus, the idea now seems to be, to bring a child to nature, or to art, or to literature, or to whatever we may wish him to learn, in such a way that he may learn by his own personal observation and experience. For example, my own children often brought back from school, seeds and caterpillars, and tadpoles, and the like, and these they watched with the greatest interest. And thus, instead of being taught facts about nature, they were taught to know Nature herself ; and to know Nature is to love Nature and to long to know more.

Nature, the dear old Nurse,
Took the child upon her knee
Saying, "Here is a story book
Thy Father hath written for thee."

"Come, wander with me," she said.
"Into regions yet untrod,
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him all the way
The songs of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvellous tale.

To such a system of education there is no finality. We cease to be students only when we cease to be.

And what is true of Nature is equally true of Art. Some time ago, a lady came to the Manchester School of Art and said that she wanted "finishing lessons." The Principal of the School, whom she addressed, happened to be talking to Walter Crane at the time; the two smiled at each other, and informed the good lady that they did not feel themselves qualified to give "finishing lessons," and that to get them she would have to go elsewhere. Whereupon the poor lady turned away, grievously disappointed! And if there be no finality in Art, still less is there finality in religion.

And now for the application of what I have been saying: Let us first turn to the views of religious truth commonly held by other religious denominations. And here let me remind you, that I am not speaking of individual members but of the denominations as denominations. They have their creeds and dogmas, their Thirty-nine Articles, their Westminster Confessions, their Longer and Shorter Catechisms, and the like. All which, mark you, contain a large amount of Greek theology and metaphysics, and comparatively little of the Christianity of Christ. And when these have been understood and believed and accepted as true, then salvation is assured; the end of religion has been attained. As though, forsooth, salvation could ever be attained by holding certain theological opinions about Christ, however sound those opinions might be.

But the Quaker view of truth knows no such limitations ; finality it has none. George Fox said that his function was to bring people to Christ, and to leave them there. And why ? Surely in order that they might learn, by personal experience and observation, more and more of the height and depth and length and breadth of the Love of God.

Those who have received truth from this point of view are scarcely likely, if they have thought about it, to speak of their salvation, as having been attained. Rather, like the Apostle Paul, they will regard themselves as amongst those who are "being saved" ; growing more and more into the full stature and perfect likeness of their Lord and Master.

And now let us consider for a short time, how very different are the results produced by Truth received from these two points of view. For example, the members of other religious denominations believe, theoretically, in the *Universal Fatherhood of God* ; yet we have only to consider their attitude towards war to see that, with many of them, this is at best but a pious opinion, "held as an infant's hand holds purposeless whatso is placed therein." Far from being a Universal Father, God is to them a Mars, or ever a Moloch, who rejoices that they should sacrifice to Him their sons.

But those who have accepted Truth from the Quaker point of view, and know by personal experience and observation that God is the Father of all men, and Jesus Christ their Elder Brother, can scarcely fail to "come into the virtue of that Life and Power, which takes away the occasion for all war."

Then again, the members of other religious denominations, theoretically hold the same view as ourselves, regarding the obligation of *absolute truthfulness*. Yet they condone a lie every time they take an oath, and that in absolute defiance of our Lord's expressed command,

“Swear not at all.” Surely it is obvious, that if a man’s oath is more binding than his simple word, then his simple word is not absolutely binding. Well might our Lord say, “Let your yea be yea and your nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil.”

Then again, the members of other religious denominations believe, theoretically, in the *universal priesthood of all believers*. Yet many of them see nothing inconsistent in the establishment of official priests with sacerdotal functions. But those who have received this truth from the Quaker point of view, and have realised by personal experience that they are in very truth priests unto God, could never entertain the idea of any human mediator between God and man.

Then again, the members of other religious denominations hold, theoretically, much the same views as ourselves regarding *communion with God*. Yet they are willing to limit this Holy Communion to such times and seasons as an official priesthood may arrange. But surely he who has once realised by personal experience the omnipresence of God, and His nearness to us—that He is as near to us to-day as ever He can be, either in this world or the next—could never submit to any such limitations of time and place. We know by personal experience that we can and do enjoy this precious privilege of Holy Communion at all times and at all seasons; and that, moreover, without any priestly intervention.

Stephen Grellet, the Quaker evangelist, tells us that in his own personal experience it became impossible for him ever to break bread at an ordinary meal without remembering in deep thankfulness of heart the Body that was broken and the Blood that was shed on Calvary. Thus our religion becomes a thing, not of special times and places, but of the ordinary every-day life, permeating our every word, and thought, and deed.

And, although, perhaps, Stephen Grellet may not have been sufficient of an historian to recognise the fact, yet this experience of his was the only Eucharist recognised by the Church of the first century. In those early days every social meal was a "Lord's Supper."

Hatch and other historians have shown that the present method of celebrating "The Lord's Supper" has come about largely under the influence of Greek usage. The ritual customary at the ceremony of initiation into the Greek "Mysteries of Eleusis" was copied by the Early Christians and changed their simple love-feast, or "agape" into the "Mystery of the Sacrament."

Many of the Greek philosophers who became converted to Christianity had been initiated into the mysteries, and they introduced the ritual to which they were accustomed, and which was dear to them, into the new faith.

Again, our fellow Christians believe, theoretically, in the *outpouring of the Holy Spirit*, and have even set apart a special day to commemorate this great fact of religious experience. Yet, at the same time, many of them would shut up "inspiration" within the covers of the Bible and count as heresy any idea that men may still be inspired to speak, and act, and think, as were the prophets and apostles of old.

But so great was the faith of the Early Friends in a present inspiration that they refused to give to the Bible that most misleading and most unscriptural title "The Word of God," reserving that title for the Living Word, which was from the beginning ere ever the Bible was written; which two thousand years ago was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us; and which is still the source and inspiration of every noble word and thought and deed.

The *prepared sermon* as now we know it, with its artificial construction, its firstly, secondly, and thirdly,

was a product of Greek art and not of Christian origin. In an age of decadence, when originality of thought had been largely replaced by elaboration of diction, Greek sophists and rhetoricians used to give "discourses" from texts, just as ministers of religion preach sermons to-day. And the Greek discourse was undoubtedly the parent of the modern sermon. Indeed, the only striking difference between the two was the derivation of the text. The Greek philosopher took his text generally from Homer, though sometimes from Plato, or Sophocles, or from some other classical writer; whilst the modern minister of religion takes his text from the Bible.

But in the Christian Church of the first century all the prophesying was spontaneous, just as it is in a Friends' Meeting to-day. It was not restricted to an official class, for in those early days, there was no distinction between clergy and laity. Men, and women too, "spake as the Spirit gave them utterance."

In the second and third centuries, however, preachers like Chrysostom arose, who had learnt their art, not in the school of Christ, but in the schools of Greek rhetoricians, and before the close of the second century ministry under the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God was deemed heretical. Tertullian missed his place in the "Saints' Calendar" because he believed that such speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit still had a legitimate place in the Christian Church. So early and so completely had the Church come under the influence of Greek usage.

Finally, the members of other religious denominations profess to believe in the *Headship of Christ*. Theoretically they hold the view, just as we do, that Christ is present at their gatherings, and can speak to those who have met together to worship Him. But in practice few, if any of them, ever dream of acting upon this assumption. No provision whatever is made for

Christ Himself to influence the conduct of their worship, nor is any time of silence allowed when His Still Small Voice might be heard.

Friends alone, have the courage of their convictions, and, meeting under the Headship of Christ, trust Him to order the conduct of their meetings aright.

Our meetings are held on a basis of silence, and we are oft-times rewarded by finding them eloquent, not only with the voices of those who speak under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, but still more are they eloquent with the Still Small Voice of God Himself, speaking to the hearts and consciences of those that wait upon Him.

I well remember, some years ago, visiting a Friends' Meeting in a lovely village in Derbyshire, and there I was told that a Deacon of the Congregational Chapel in the village had, out of curiosity, attended one of their meetings. Now it so happened that on that particular Sunday all the leading Friends of the meeting were away, and no one was there who was accustomed to taking a vocal share in the ministry. So the Deacon wondered much what would happen. He himself was responsible, in his own place of worship, for finding a substitute for the minister, when from any cause he happened to be away, and terrible had been the straits to which he had often been put. But what was his astonishment to find that the absence of the leading Friends made no difference whatever. The meeting was held just as usual, and the power of the Spirit was so manifest in the meeting that the Deacon himself was convinced of the truth, and shortly afterwards joined the society. So absolutely independent are we of everything save only the Spirit of God.

Now it was this independence of everything outward and material which, more than anything else, enabled the Early Friends to win the battle of religious liberty. After the passing of the Act of Uniformity and

Conventicles Act, when any meeting numbering more than five persons was illegal outside a Church of England, the other Nonconformist sects offered a feeble resistance, but were easily dealt with. Their minister was imprisoned, their books were confiscated, and their meetings were at an end. But not so the Friends! The soldiers broke into their meetings and imprisoned any one who happened to be speaking. But the meeting went on as though nothing had happened. They locked up the meeting-houses, but the meetings were held outside in the street. They pulled down the meeting-houses, but the meetings were held on the ruins. In Bristol and Reading not only did they lock up the meeting-houses, but they imprisoned all the adult members of the meeting. But the following Sunday, the children met outside the meeting-house door, and hundreds came from far and near, some out of sympathy and some out of curiosity, and the meetings were larger than ever. And thus the Society grew, even though more than 4,000 Friends were rotting in the filthy dungeons of our land, until at last moral and spiritual force triumphed over physical force, and the Toleration Act was passed.

Now it is just this practical and Primitive Christianity that the world needs to-day. It has been well said that "we have had two thousand years of Christianity, but the religion of Christ has yet to be tried." And so it is, for the so-called "Christian" nations are utterly pagan, and even in the so-called "Christian" Churches there is, as we have already seen, much that is of pagan rather than of Christian origin. Not only are they organised on a pagan model, but they are, in large measure, pagan in their creeds and practices.

Now what the world wants is reality, and reality is what the Society of Friends has always stood for.

In the old Hebrew days, men who could see right through the outward appearance of things to the truth of God which lies behind those outward appearances, were called "seers." And the Early Friends were seers; for, by the light of Christ, they saw right through all external appearances, all shows and shams, and stood face to face with the Eternal Truth of God. To such men all creeds and dogmas, all signs and symbols, all outward rites and sacerdotal observances, were mere hindrances and impediments to truth. Nor need we wonder at this, for those to whom the "real presence" was a daily, and even a constant experience, could never be satisfied with baubles.

And that reality, which the Society of Friends has stood for in the past, we wish to stand for to-day. Will you not come then, and worship with us? Throw aside your crutches, your creeds, your ritual, your prepared sermon, your pre-arranged services, your outward and visible signs, which all too often correspond to no realities of spiritual experience, and let us together worship God in the beauty of holiness, and in the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ.

"But," you say, "I find my crutches a help to me, and it is surely better to go to Heaven on crutches than never to get there." Yes; a thousand times yes! But why limp to Heaven like cripples when we can walk erect like men, as Christ intended we should do?

"But," again you will say, "I have been to your meetings, and I have not found them helpful. I believe your ideal to be the true one, but in actual practice your meetings are not what I need."

Well! our meetings are what we make them, and if they are not ideal, then come and help to make them so. The liberty which we claim for ourselves, we do not deny to others. Our only stipulation is that all things shall be done decently and in order, and that all

vocal utterance shall be prompted by the Spirit of God. But, whether to us be given the ministry of speech or the ministry of silence, upon one and all alike rests the responsibility of offering up to God an acceptable sacrifice of prayer and praise. Nor will our meetings for worship ever be thoroughly appreciated by those who do not rise to this responsibility.

In our quiet meetings you may not hear much eloquence of speech, but you shall feel the eloquence of silence. You may not join in the harmony of hymns, but you shall join in the harmony of hearts, and you shall know what it is to have your own hearts attuned responsive to the divine harmonies of Heaven. Aye! and more than that—you too, shall become seers, and, by the Divine Light of an ever-living and ever-present Redeemer, you shall see right through all shows and shams and the external appearance of things, and realise for yourselves more and more of the reality of God's Eternal Truth and Love.

CHAPTER IV

WORSHIP

ALTHOUGH "worship" is the title which I have chosen for this address, worship was not the subject which I had in mind when I first set to work to prepare it. It was then my intention to prepare an address on the subject of *fellowship*, and "fellowship" was the title which I originally chose. But as my work approached completion, I found, to my surprise, that I had prepared an address on the subject of worship, and the title was changed accordingly. And this significant fact may well serve to illustrate the close connection which exists between these two important subjects, worship and fellowship. They are not of course identical. We may have, and often do have, fellowship without worship. But I believe that it is practically impossible to have worship in any full and complete sense without fellowship.

In the earliest days of which we have any knowledge, the thought of worship was always associated with the rite of *sacrifice*; and, although I know that the theory is much controverted, I like to think that the late Professor Robertson Smith was right when he taught, as teach he did, that the earliest thought associated with the rite of sacrifice was the thought, not of expiation, but of fellowship. Just at first it was probably merely human fellowship that was thought of, as in the old Arabian "blood-bond," of which probably many of you will have heard. Two wild sons of the desert would chance

to meet, and their attitude towards each other would naturally be an attitude of intense suspicion and distrust. For in those early days the stranger was always an enemy until he proved himself to be a friend. Even the etymology of our own language bears somewhat striking testimony to this fact. To fare was to fear. The two words are identical. The way-faring man was the way-fearing man, who went about in constant dread of the unknown. But as these two wild Arabs get to know each other better, their attitude of suspicion and distrust gives place to an attitude of mutual respect and sympathy, and they determine to cement their newly-found friendship by means of a sacrament. And a very striking sacrament it is. Each opens a vein in his arm and they drink one another's blood in token of eternal unity. From this time forth the same blood flows in the veins of both of them. In short, they are *akin*. And neither would any more think of injuring the other than he would dream of injuring himself.

This ancient Arabian blood-bond not improbably represents the earliest idea associated with the Sacramental shedding of blood. But ere long another idea entered in, *The thought of God*.

Probably long before Jehovah was worshipped, and even before there were any children of Israel to worship Jehovah, it was customary for Arab tribes to offer sacrifice to Baal. Every town and village and every fertile tract of land had each its own Baal, or Lord, who was worshipped at a sacred pillar, or stone. Now the baal was supposed to be the giver of fertility, and, in a physical sense, the original father of the tribe, the earth being its mother. You all, no doubt, at times speak of "mother earth," little thinking that this is an interesting survival of this ancient semitic myth, that the baal is the original father, and the earth the original mother, of us all.

Moreover, every Arab tribe has each its own sacred animal, which was supposed to be akin to the tribe and its baal, and was never slain except sacrificially. Thus with the tribes which eventually formed the Children of Israel the sacred animal was the bull. Hence the interesting story of the golden calf. But other tribes had other sacred animals. With one tribe the sacred animal would be the sheep ; with another the camel. In every case the members of the tribe, their baal, and the sacred animal were all supposed to be of the same blood, or akin. And so, when the festival season came round, at which the worship of Baal was consummated, the sacred animal was slain, its blood was poured out upon the sacred stone, and, sinking into the earth, was supposed to have been consumed thereby. Then the entrails and kidney-fat were burnt upon the sacred stone, and were supposed to ascend as a sweet savour to Baal. These were *Baal's portions*. The rest of the sacred animal was eaten by the members of the tribe, who thus believed that they became partakers of the divine nature, renewing their fellowship one with another and with their God and Father.

Not that I have the slightest desire to paint the worship of Baal in roseate hues. These Canaanitish festivals at which the worship of Baal was consummated were, as a matter of fact, little better than drunken orgies ; orgies of unbridled passion and unlimited vice. Indeed, it was largely on account of the terrible immorality associated with baal worship, that the prophets of Israel strove so heroically to keep their fellow-countrymen loyal to Jehovah. But whilst we fully recognise that the thought in the minds of these baal worshippers was crude in the extreme, and its expression indescribably gross and sensual, let not this blind us to the fact that the thought was, at bottom, a true one. Aye ! it was the greatest and most fundamental truth of all religion ; the truth

that men can enjoy fellowship one with another in communion with God their Father, and that they may thus become partakers of the divine nature. Here, indeed, we have the *Atonement*. The atonement in its simplest and most primitive form to be sure, but none the less true, perhaps even all the more true, on that account. The at-one-ment of God and man realised in animal sacrifice.

Now it is quite easy to see that this thought of human fellowship in divine communion, which sacrifice was originally intended to express, was a thought capable of being spiritualised and ennobled, and, as a matter of fact, this is exactly what happened. Under the influence of the prophets of Israel it was spiritualised and ennobled more and more until, on the occasion of the Last Supper, our Lord led His disciples to realise something of the full depth and significance of sacrifice. On that occasion of awful solemnity, when their Lord and Master broke bread with them for the last time before His Crucifixion, they were privileged to enter sympathetically into the Divine Sorrow and to realise, as they had never done before, what it was to become partakers of the divine nature, which nature is Love.

I do not think it is possible for us to understand what happened, if we do not appreciate how perfectly simple and natural it all was. Our Lord was celebrating the Passover with His disciples, and the ceremony was that of the ordinary Passover Feast. Now the disciples, though they obviously did not realise the full meaning of the scene in which they were taking part, did realise that they were on the eve of a terrible catastrophe, and that their Lord and Master was about to be taken from them. And as they sat sorrowfully around the board, our Lord took the passover cake, and, after the customary benediction, handed it round, adding, however, to the benediction the words, "Take, eat, This is My Body." And the cup, in like manner, He handed round,

adding again to the customary benediction the words, "Drink ye all of it, for This is My Blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

He had used the same figure of speech at least once before, and His meaning would be far more obvious to His disciples than it is to us. In our minds the thought of communion is not associated with the thought of sacrifice. But in theirs it was. They might well remember how, in times gone by, countless sacred animals had been slain and eaten in order that men might realise afresh their fellowship one with another in communion with God. But this time He, their Lord and Master, was to be the sacred animal for sacrifice, and they, by spiritually partaking of Him, would be united together in holy fellowship, to live His life, to think His thoughts, and to carry on His beneficent work when, in the flesh, He would no longer be with them. Their lips were to proclaim His glorious message of salvation. Their hands were to carry on His work of healing. Their hearts, like His, were to throb sympathetically with the woes of their fellow-men.

And this Holy Communion is ours to-day, and daily we may partake of it, and that without any priestly mediation. For wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name there is He in our midst, His Hand outstretched, offering to us the bread of life, and the sacred chalice of His blood. And thus not only our meetings for worship, but our family gatherings, as when we meet morning and evening to read the Scriptures in His Name, or when at grace before meat we seek to recognise the Giver of every good gift, all such times as these may be, and ought to be, times of Holy Communion when we realise afresh our fellowship with Christ and one with another.

Moreover, without this sense of fellowship no true worship, in any full and complete sense, is possible.

Of course, I know that in the past great and good souls have worshipped God in deserts, finding in a sense of harmony with nature and unity with all creation, that element in worship which fellowship supplies. Nor do I wish to dispute the fact that it is well for us all, at times, to retire into solitude that we may there commune with God. But it is none the less true that, as a general rule, it is impossible to worship God in any full and complete sense unless we have fellowship one with another. This is why worship, to be fully realised, must be a congregational and not merely an individual experience. Ideal worship cannot be solitary, because it cannot be selfish.

It has been well and truly said that man is a gregarious animal, for there is in every healthy-minded man and woman, a natural craving for human fellowship which nothing but fellowship can ever satisfy. Why is it that our public houses are so full and our places of worship so empty? Is it that drink can be bought in the public house and not in the place of worship? I think not! With shame be it confessed that the fellowship in the public house is often a more real thing than the fellowship in the place of worship. Think for a moment how in the public house social distinctions vanish and every man is a hale fellow well met. Would that it were so in the place of worship! It ought to be so, but alas! it is not. Then again, think of how much small-minded jealousy and spiteful gossip there is amongst church-goers and chapel-goers; and these things seem quite compatible with a large amount of outward piety. I very much doubt whether they are as much in evidence amongst the frequenters of the public house. Not that I hold any brief on behalf of the public house. No one knows better than I do how utterly demoralising is the fellowship of that institution. But for all that, it is a real thing, and men know that it

is real ; whilst the fellowship of the place of worship is not always a real thing, and men are not slow to recognise its want of reality.

I have often heard it argued that the emptiness of our places of worship shows that men are less religious now than they used to be. But I do not believe that this is so. May it not be that our places of worship are empty because, in a blind sort of way, man has still a true religious instinct. A keen observer once defined man as being an *incorrigibly religious animal*. And so he is ; and if our places of worship are empty, depend upon it there is something wrong with our places of worship. And I believe that if we want them to be full once more, we must learn a lesson from the public house, and see to it that our fellowship is a real fellowship ; that our places of worship are places where a man can always feel sure of finding a kindly smile, a hearty handshake, and a true sense of brotherhood ; and that not merely on Sundays, but any day and every day in the week. It is surely an absurd anachronism to suppose that our places of worship are so sacred that they, like our Sunday clothes, must only be used on one day out of seven. But a time comes when our Sunday clothes lose their beautiful straight creases, and begin to look a trifle untidy ; and then we begin to feel comfortable and at home in them ; and then we begin to use them every day. And the sooner that which happens to our Sunday clothes, happens also to our places of worship, the better will it be for religion. Then, and then only, will our churches be full and our public houses empty.

That our Lord fully realised the importance of fellowship and its necessary association with worship, is well illustrated in the prayer which He taught to His disciples. He did not teach them to say : My Father, which art in heaven, give me my daily bread, forgive me

my debts as I forgive my debtors, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil. No ! He taught them to say : “ Our Father, which art in heaven, give us *our* daily bread, forgive us *our* debts as we forgive our debtors, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ” ; and thus, in prayer, He taught His disciples to recognise the solidarity of all mankind and the universal brotherhood of man. And when we pray, as I fear we oft-times do, for anything in which others cannot share ; when we pray “ give me so and so ” ; “ God help me ” ; “ God bless me,” we dishonour Him in Whose Name we pray, by doing violence to the most fundamental characteristic of His teaching. If we must think in terms of *I* and *me* and *mine*, let us not pray “ God help me,” but rather “ God make me helpful.” Let us not pray “ God bless me,” but rather “ God make me a blessing to others.”

But how much better it would be, could we carry into practice our Lord’s teaching and think and pray, not in terms of *I* and *me* and *mine*, but rather in terms of *we* and *us* and *ours*. For if our Lord taught anything at all, he taught that mankind is one great family, knit together by the indissoluble bonds of a common humanity ; with common needs, common feelings, common weaknesses, common emotions. That indeed, we are members one of another, and it is impossible for any man to injure another without doing injury to the community as a whole, and to himself as a member of the community. And similarly, it is impossible for any man to benefit another without himself being blessed.

After the Ascension of their Lord, the Apostolic Church was by no means slow to put into practice this fundamental teaching of the Master. The Church was a communistic society, and students of Early Church History tell us that a sense of brotherhood was one of

its most striking characteristics. All who joined it felt instinctively that they had entered into a real brotherhood, where the need of one was the concern of all. Thus Hatch tells us, that brotherhood stood for a great reality in the primitive Church of the first century. Fostered as it was by bitter persecution, it proved an all-sufficient bond of union, binding its members together as one. The Primitive Church was, indeed, a Christian Fellowship.

But as the Church gained in political power, it lost in spiritual grace, and the natural consequence was that this sense of brotherhood weakened until, in the days of Constantine, professing Christians had to look for other bonds of union; and these they found in uniformity of creed and dogma and ritual, and in church organisation, and to these they have clung with a pathetic tenacity from that day to this.

If you turn to the tenth chapter of John and the sixteenth verse, you may read in the Authorised Version, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. These also must I bring, and they shall hear My Voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." But here we have a mistranslation, which has, fortunately, been corrected in the Revised Version. Christ never said: "there shall be one *fold* and one shepherd." What He did say was: "there shall be one *flock* and one shepherd." A very different thing. But, as Rufus Jones has pointed out, ever since the days of Constantine, the various sections of the Christian Church have set themselves to work to build *sheep-folds*; pens, with high walls of creed and dogma, which they have called "orthodoxy," and a gate which they have called "the way of salvation." But in no case has it been the living way. And although each section of the Church has christened all the animals inside its particular pen "*sheep*," and all the animals outside its particular pen "*goats*," yet any

unprejudiced observer can see at a glance that what they have really built has not been in the least degree like a sheep-fold. Rather has it been like a village pound for the collection of stray animals, and in these pens or pounds they have collected a few stray sheep to be sure, but also many goats and not a few stray donkeys. But the true sheep will always fight shy of these artificial sheep-pens, for "where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty," and there can never be any true liberty within high walls of creed and dogma. And if men really want to find a bond of union, which will once more reunite Christendom, they must look for it where the Apostolic Church found it, in the Universal Fatherhood of God, and the universal brotherhood of man. The primitive Church was bound together as one because its members were all loyal to Christ, and translated His law of loving self-sacrifice into the language of everyday life. We have had many translations of the Gospel lately, but the translation which is most needed to-day, is its translation into everyday life.

Far be it from me to help to build another sheep-pen or village pound. Indeed, after what I have already said, it would ill-become me to do so. And yet my address would seem very incomplete were I not to conclude it by a little gentle advocacy of our Quaker methods. If we remember what true fellowship is; that it has nothing whatever to do with uniformity either of belief or practice, but that it consists of unity of spirit in the bond of peace, then I feel sure that however strongly we hold our opinions, and however earnestly we advocate them, we shall find that we have been helping to build no mere sheep pen, but the Universal Church of God. Let us then bear this in mind whilst we ask ourselves the question, "to what extent does a Friends' meeting help us to realise the ideal of worship?"

We call our meetings "*meetings for worship*," and their name correctly sets forth their object. They are meetings for worship. Now we have already seen that two things are absolutely essential to true worship. We must, of course, have communion with God. But we must also have fellowship one with another, without which no communion with God in any full sense is possible. For how can we love God, Whom we have not seen, if we love not our brother whom we have seen, and who was made in the image of God? You will remember that wonderfully pregnant saying of Jesus, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." And many of us know, by bitter experience, how impossible it is to worship God if we are out of harmony with our fellow men.

To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Is then a Friends' meeting the very best means imaginable for the realisation of this human fellowship in divine communion?

Personally, I think that it is. The meetings of the Apostolic Church were held in almost precisely the same way. That is to say, the members met as a brotherhood without any social or religious distinctions. There was no distinction between clergy and laity; the gifts of all were fully recognised and were freely made use of. Moreover, so long as the meetings of the Primitive Church retained their Quaker simplicity and spontaneity, so long did the sense of brotherhood remain strong.

And if the sense of brotherhood was strong in the Primitive Church of the first century, it was not less

strong in the Society of Friends when that Society was first founded by George Fox.

But, unlike the Primitive Church, we Friends have retained our simple mode of worship, and have not resorted to any artificial methods of binding our members together. More than that, we have burnt our boats behind us, for we have renounced all creeds and dogmas and sacerdotal rites, and also a paid clergy and a priestly hierarchy. Indeed, we have renounced all those things which the Church found so essential to bind her members together when the sense of brotherhood was lost. So that when our sense of brotherhood ceases to be real, there is nothing else that we can fall back upon, and we must, of necessity, go to pieces like a house of cards. Indeed, this is exactly what has happened in a great many places. When the sense of brotherhood has been lost, the meeting has ceased to exist; and this surely is the best thing that could happen to it, for when a thing ceases to be real, the best thing that can happen to it is that it should cease to be. It is no use keeping up the form of worship when the spirit of worship has been lost. But I cannot imagine any better means for the realisation of human fellowship in divine communion than that of meeting together as we do, and as the Apostolic Church did, without any social or religious distinctions, to worship God in Spirit and in truth. No one is appointed to conduct our services, for One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren.

Believing, as we do, that He is present at our gatherings, we feel that we have no need of any other president or conductor. Under Him every worshipper has an equal share of responsibility for the ministry of the meeting. Indeed, every one must take an active part in the ministry, for we Friends recognise a ministry of silence, which we believe to be quite as important as the vocal ministry, and this ministry of silence is incumbent

on every worshipper. Indeed, the only legitimate reason either for speaking or for remaining silent in a Friends' meeting is an earnest desire to serve God by helping our fellow worshippers.

What then is the consequence of thus abolishing the one man ministry and throwing the responsibility upon the rank and file of the worshippers ?

The consequences are many and various, but the one to which I wish to draw your attention is this : that, whilst you may hear far more eloquent sermons in almost any dissenting chapel, and whilst you may attend far more elegant services amongst our brethren of the Roman and Anglican communities, yet, when our meetings are held in the life and power of the Master, nowhere will you feel drawn so near to God and to your fellow-man as in a Friends' meeting.

But the final test of our methods cannot be a subjective one. Indeed, I cannot imagine anything more utterly demoralising than self-indulgence in a mere sentiment or emotion of fellowship which finds no outlet in the everyday life. The final test of a machine is the work which it turns out, and the final test of a religious organisation is the standard of character which it has produced in the past, and which it is still capable of showing. How does the Society of Friends stand this test ? Has it produced men and women of sterling character and integrity ? Good parents, good neighbours, good citizens, good patriots, in the best sense of the word ? Have its members shown themselves ready and willing to sacrifice self-interest for the common weal ? Have their lives borne witness to a full and practical recognition of the deep and wide obligations of a universal brotherhood ?

Now I am fully aware that there is a great deal in our past history, and still more in our present condition, which may well forbid us to speak boastfully. And yet

I have no hesitation in answering these questions in the affirmative. The Society of Friends has produced, and still does produce, such men and such women. Indeed, if the object of a religious organisation is to produce men and women of saintly character and unselfish life, then indeed the Society of Friends was not founded in vain.

Moreover, whatever measure of success has been achieved in this particular has, I feel sure, been due very largely to the way in which our meetings for worship have been held.

There are many just now who seem anxious to alter the character of our meetings for worship, in order to make them more attractive and entertaining. But our meetings for worship are, in my opinion, the backbone of our whole organisation. They are that from which everything takes its character, and upon which everything depends. It is impossible to materially alter the character of our meetings for worship without altering the character of the Society itself, and if we do this, then the Quakerism of the future will be an entirely different thing from the Quakerism of the past.

Not that I wish to plead for any want of elasticity in our methods. What I do dread is the introduction of innovations which must, of necessity, curtail the perfect liberty which, at the present time, we enjoy. Let us remember "how easy it is to adulterate; how difficult to refine."

Nor was there ever a time when our Quaker protest in favour of simplicity and reality in the worship of God was so much needed as it is needed to-day. Thus when we look at the Anglican Church we see the Ritualistic party daily gaining ground, and the simple Gospel of our Lord and Saviour is lost in an ornate sacerdotalism.

When I think of this, I am reminded of that beautiful domestic scene, when our Lord visited the quiet home in

Bethany. You will remember how Martha was fussing about preparing a sumptuous supper for her Lord, whilst Mary sat still at His feet, enjoying His society. And at last Martha's temper gets the better of her, and she comes to Jesus with the question, "Lord, carest Thou not that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" Whereon our Lord answered, and I can imagine that there was a kindly twinkle in His eye, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But little is needed, and Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

But little is needed. I often wish that the translation which we find in the margin of our Revised Version had been incorporated in the text, for as it stands at present, the whole point of the story is lost. You see that Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. He had not come there to be made a fuss of, but to enjoy in quietness the sweet intercourse of His friends; and although two thousand years have passed away since He visited that quiet home in Bethany, His Nature has not changed. His tastes are still as simple as ever they were, and still He says to the Ritualist: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But why all this fuss? Why all these elaborate preparations? But little is needed, and Mary hath chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her."

Then again, another tendency is creeping into the Churches which seems to me to be far more deplorable, because it is more demoralising, than Ritualism. One has only to glance at our hoardings to see that the feverish desire for entertainment, which is such a striking characteristic of our civic life, is creeping into our places of worship, and is greatly modifying the character of their services. Ministers of all denominations are vying with each other in their attempts to find sensational titles for their sermons, whilst their services often partake

far too largely of the nature of religious variety entertainments. The very meaning of worship is almost lost sight of. Worship does not consist in listening to sermons or in singing hymns, or in being entertained. To be sure, sermons and hymns may at times be an aid towards worship, but far oftener they are a substitute for it. True worship is still, as it ever was, a sacrifice, and until we bring to God all our hearts can hold of pure intent and reverence and love, we shall not know what true worship means. Let us then, like Mary of old, bring our alabaster boxes of very precious ointment, and pour their contents forth at the feet of the Master.

CHAPTER V

FAITH

IF I were to pick out the most historical text in the whole Bible, the one I would choose would be this : "The just shall live by Faith." At one time it was the motto of orthodox Judaism. In the first century it was adopted by Paul as the watchword of evangelical Christianity ; and in the sixteenth century Luther founded upon it his great doctrine of Justification by Faith. But texts are demoralising things. They can be made to mean anything that the human mind wishes them to mean. Thus to the orthodox Jew, the words meant that the just man would live by his faithfulness to the Mosaic Law. To Paul they meant that the Christian would attain to eternal life by faith in Christ, regardless of the Mosaic Law. To Luther they meant that the believer in Christ would be justified by his faith regardless of morality. Probably the modern evangelical Christian understands by the text that all those who take his own view regarding the Atoning Work of Christ, will be justified and will enjoy everlasting life.

And when a text of Scripture means different things to different people, it is often useful to trace it back to its source and see what it meant to the man to whom it first came as a message direct from God. Now that man was Habakkuk. To be sure his writings are but little read, yet he was one of the greatest of the prophets of Israel, and one of the most sublime of

her poets. A flood of light is thrown upon the words when we study the circumstances which first led to their utterance.

Never was there a time, in the whole history of the world, when faith in God seemed so impossible, as the time of Habakkuk. The eighth century prophets had taught the nation that, if only it did right, prosperity was certain to follow. Their simple philosophy of life might be summed up in the aphorism: "Be good and you will be happy." And for more than a century this simple philosophy of life seemed to work well. But it only worked well because this turbulent little nation never did do right. It always lived far below the prophetic ideals, so that when disaster befell it, as oft-times it did, there was always something to which the prophet could point and say: "*There* is the cause of your misfortune."

But the testing-time came when the boy-king Josiah ascended the throne. Then, for the first time in the history of Israel, the prophetic party came to be in the ascendant. The Book of Deuteronomy was found in the Temple, and a great moral and spiritual reformation took place. Now, surely, the nation would prosper, and their heathen oppressors be destroyed.

For a while, it looked as though such might be the case. The strong arm of Assyria showed signs of incipient paralysis, and the iron grasp in which it held the Palestinian States began to relax. But the prosperity of Israel was short-lived. Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt, taking advantage of the weakness of Assyria, led a huge army northward, to attack Egypt's ancient enemy.

Folly is quite as capable of bringing disaster as is sin, and Josiah, with a heroism closely akin to madness, led the tiny army of Israel against the Egyptian host. The "King after God's own heart" was slain on the

field of Megiddo, and this was the end of all their bright hopes, and confident expectations.

It is intensely interesting to compare the writings of Habakkuk with those of the eighth century prophets. The eighth century prophets constantly called Israel to her trial and found her guilty. Habakkuk, that brave old sceptic, with a still nobler flight of faith, called God to His trial, and asked Him what He meant by it. "Art not Thou of old, Jehovah, my God, my Holy One? Purer of Eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not gaze upon trouble. Why gazest Thou upon traitors? Art dumb when the wicked swallows him that is more righteous than he?"

And when no answer comes, he says, in a passage of matchless beauty,

Upon my watch-tower I will stand, and take my post upon the rampart.
I will watch to see what He will say to me, and what answer I get
back to my plea.

And when at last the answer does come, it is in large measure a counsel of patience. God points out to His Prophet that the pride and arrogance of the oppressor presage his downfall. Then He goes on to say, "But the just shall live by faith"—or, as it might be better translated, "the righteous shall live by his faithfulness." That is to say, Judah, the righteous nation, shall live by its loyalty to God and His laws.

The word translated "faith" is the same word as is used elsewhere for *faithfulness* between man and wife; it means *fidelity* or *loyalty*. Now consider for a moment how wonderfully history has vindicated this prophecy of Habakkuk. Centuries after their proud oppressors were crumbling in their graves, when Nineveh and Babylon were mere mounds of sand, and their very existence almost forgotten, Israel was, and is still, living obedient to the law of God as revealed in the Torah. Of a truth the just *has* lived by faith.

Thus we see that to the prophet Habakkuk, who first used the word "faith" in a religious sense, its meaning had nothing whatever to do with belief in a doctrine. It did not mean shutting one's eyes to facts, and blindly accepting as true the orthodox teaching of the day. That is the negation of Faith, and it is just what Habakkuk refused to do. Faith meant loyalty to God; loyalty to His Truth; loyalty to His Eternal Law of Righteousness; and surely it still means the same. Faith has nothing to do with soundness of view; it has everything to do with soundness of life.

Now, whilst we fully recognise that the simple philosophy preached by the eighth century prophets fails to cover all the facts of life, let us not overlook the fundamental truth which underlies that philosophy. It is absolutely and eternally true that no nation can be really strong and great, whose moral life is corrupt. Right and wrong are not the arbitrary creations of theologians and moralists. Right is right because it is that which tends to bring health, and happiness, and prosperity to the community. Wrong is wrong because it brings to the community disease and disaster, sorrow and suffering. Moral degradation must ever mean physical deterioration, for the moral laws are laws of health. It is not by accident that the two words "healthy" and "holy" are both derived from the same Anglo-Saxon root, and are virtually the same word. If we would have a healthy nation, strong and virile, we must have a moral nation. Of a truth it is Righteousness that exalteth a nation.

So the word "faith" means "faithfulness"; and to the Christian it ought to mean fidelity to the Prince of Peace and to the Law of Love, which He taught. It cannot mean less than this.

But when a word has been used for many centuries, it gathers around it associations which did not originally

belong to it, but which may nevertheless be perfectly legitimate. This fact was brought home to my mind some years ago, when the subject of faith was discussed at our Adult School. I began the discussion by asking for a definition of the word "faith," and the answer I received was, "Faith is that which brings us in touch with God." It was not the answer which I wanted, but here we have one of those associations which have gathered round the word "Faith," and which now rightly belongs to it. I told the men to think of one of our Manchester tram-cars, the arm of which is broken so that it is out of touch with the trolley-wire. There it stands in the way, and if it is to be got out of the way it must be pushed along, or lifted bodily. Such is belief in a doctrine. But imagine the same car with the arm intact, and not only intact, but in contact with the trolley-wire. Now, not only can it move, but it can carry its heavy freight of passengers to their destination. That is Faith. There is no such thing as a passive faith. Faith always works, and anything that does not work is not faith. It may be belief ; it may be credulity ; it may be superstition : but faith it is not.

When I was a small child, I used to be put to bed in a large nursery, having a heavy wooden shutter which moved upwards in front of the window, to keep out the light. It was a most unhealthy arrangement, but that was long before the importance of light and air was recognised by parents. I well remember one summer evening the nurse put me to bed with an older brother, and left us without having completely closed the shutter. A wide chink was left at the top, through which a broad beam of light streamed upon our bed. Having been accustomed to absolute darkness we could not sleep. For some time we tossed about, until a happy thought struck us. We had heard of the efficacy of prayer, and

we determined to pray that the shutter might shut. So pray we did, bringing to our help a simple credulity that only childhood can command. As we prayed, we gazed at the shutter, expecting every moment to see it glide silently upwards, or even shut with a bang. Yet that shutter never moved an inch, and what I called my "faith" received a severe and salutary shock from which I am glad to say it has not even yet recovered. So that was a faith that did not work. What that shutter needed was a push, and a great many of our prayers remain unanswered for want of a push. Prayer is not an easy way of getting what we want without working for it.

Jesus once said: "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this mountain, 'be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea,' and it would be done." Doubtless it would be done, but it would take a deal of hard work with pickaxes and shovels to do it. You might sit down before that mountain, and say, "Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea," and if nothing more were done, the mountain would no more move than did my shutter! Faith has moved many mountains, but the faith that moves mountains is faith that works. It is a mere travesty of faith that leads us to expect miracles to be wrought for us. Miracles are wrought by Faith; but it is we ourselves who have to work the miracles. True faith fills a man with divine energy and enthusiasm, and leads him to exclaim in deep humility, "I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me."

But I think that the reason why what we call our prayers seem so futile, is not that we expect miracles. Most of us soon outgrow that kind of faith. It is because what we call our prayers do not really represent our desires. Probably in our childhood, we all learnt the hymn that begins,

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,

and although we have probably never doubted the truth of that statement, we may never have realised its implications. If prayer is the desire, and not the words in which that desire may or may not be expressed, then are our lives a constant prayer. We all have sincere desires and according as our desires are pure and noble, or selfish and degraded, so are our prayers directed to heaven or to hell. Of a truth God is not the only Hearer and Answerer of Prayer. How easy it is for us to petition God for spiritual and heavenly blessings, when all our sincere desires are of the earth, earthy ! How easy it is to ask God for a blessing on others, when all our desires centre around self and selfishness. How easy it is for us to ask that we may be made good and holy, when goodness and holiness we neither love nor desire !

So perhaps our prayers are not so futile after all. May it not be that our prayers are answered, when our petitions are not. We all know the old Latin proverb, " *Labore est orare* " ; and so it is. What a man sincerely desires he will work for. The prayer that finds expression in words alone is not worth the breath expended on it. It is stillborn, like faith without works. If we want to know what a man is really praying for, let us look at what he is working for. Here, for example, is a man who daily petitions God that His Kingdom may come. But is he working for that Kingdom ? Far otherwise. He is spending all his time and energy in making money, and we are not surprised that he becomes inordinately rich. His prayer has been answered, though his petition has not. Moreover, his prayer has been answered, not by any supernatural interference with the Laws of God, but in strict conformity with them.

Or again, here is a great nation which sends up from thousands of Churches and Chapels the petition that

God's Kingdom may come. Yet it does not come, and no wonder ! Look at what our nation is working for and fighting for—territory; new markets; new "spheres of influence"; dividends ! We have got what we wanted. Our prayers have been answered, though our petitions have not, and Jesus says of us, as He said, with such exquisite sarcasm, of the Pharisees of old, "Verily, I say unto you, they have received their reward."

When Jesus said to His disciples that if they had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, they would say unto this mountain, "Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea," and it should be done, He was thinking about His Kingdom. He was always thinking of His Kingdom and He was always talking about it, and if only we realised this fact, we should misunderstand Him far less frequently than we do. He was thinking of an unlimited monarchy in which Love should reign supreme. And He was thinking of the mountains of difficulty that stood in the way of the coming of that Kingdom. And He says to us to-day, as He said to His disciples of old, that if we had faith as a grain of mustard-seed we should say to this mountain and to that, "Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and it should be done." Here is a mountain of vested interests ! Here again is a mountain of Commercial Greed ! Here again is a mountain of Militarism ! Here again is a mountain of Gutter-press Journalism ! And there are many more beside. What colossal mountains they are ! And yet, they can be removed by faith, and faith is the only thing that can remove them.

Did it ever occur to you that the whole Church of Christ on earth once consisted of a handful of working men and a few poor peasant women ! One day they were all contained in one small room ! Yet those were the days when miracles were wrought.

Theirs was the faith that meant "fidelity"; absolute loyalty to Christ and to His Law of Love. Theirs was the faith that brings men into touch with God, the Infinite Source of all Spiritual strength. There was no need for them to wait for miracles to be wrought for them. They went forth and wrought miracles, and the impossible soon became the inevitable. And history may yet repeat itself, for the Master says to you and me to-day, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye would say unto this mountain, 'be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea,' and it should be done."

CHAPTER VI

THE BOOK OF JOB

IF a history of Faith were written, it would be a history of the world's great heretics. If Faith had been the acceptance of "sound views," there would never have been a martyr, and the eloquent chapter on Faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews would never have been written. The men of Faith have always been the heretics of their own day. We are all familiar with the saying of Jesus, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, 'Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment,' but I say unto you, that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca' (vain fellow), shall be in danger of the Council, and whosoever shall say 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of the hell of fire." Most of us have felt that the ending of the saying is unsatisfactory—it should be a crescendo, but it ends with an anti-climax. A friend of mine, the late Professor Bull, told me that "Raca" is an Aramaic word. Now there is an Aramaic word, "Moreh," which means not "fool," but "heretic," and as "Raca" is an Aramaic word it seems almost certain that it was *not* the Greek word "Moreh," meaning "fool," that was intended, but the Aramaic word "Moreh," which means "heretic." Here, then, we get the crescendo which we need, to satisfy the eternal fitness of things. "But I say unto you, that everyone

that is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the Council, and whosoever shall say 'Thou heretic,' shall be in danger of the hell of fire."

Let us then study the subject of Faith, as taught by another of the world's greatest heretics, the writer of the "Book of Job."

The solution which Habakkuk found to the problem of suffering, was to him a national solution, and a national solution only. It was the nation that was to live by its faithfulness. With a patriotism that was truly magnificent, the prophets cared nothing what became of themselves. It was sufficient for them that to their nation a glorious immortality was assured. Even the solution which we find in the Suffering Servant Poems had probably for their author a purely national significance. But when Jeremiah taught that God cared for the individual, the problem of suffering assumed a new form which demanded a new solution. If God cared for the individual, then the Justice of God in His dealings with the individual must be vindicated, and that was a far more difficult task then than now. In the eighth century B.C., there was no thought whatever of a life beyond the grave, and even in the fifth century, although there was some idea of a future life, it was not a place of rewards and punishments. Sheol, the abode of the dead, was the underworld; a place to which good and bad alike went, and endured a shadowy existence quite oblivious of what went on in the world above them. If the Justice of God was to be vindicated, it had to be done there and then. In this life the debit and credit sides of the ledger must exactly balance; a man's prosperity must exactly correspond to his merits and his sufferings must exactly correspond to his sins. This was the obvious solution that presented itself, and it was seized upon with avidity by the pious and

prosperous in Israel. Their prosperity was regarded as the reward of virtue ; they must have felt that it was no more than they deserved. Calamity was the punishment for sin, so that in their exploitations of the poor they were helping to carry out the Divine Intentions. Thus to the joy of prosperity was added the joy of conscious virtue. In short, the teaching which the eighth century prophets applied to the nation was now applied to the individual, and became the orthodox teaching of the day. " Be good and you will be happy."

But there was a man in Israel of a wonderfully tender and sympathetic spirit, and the most marvellous poetic genius the world has ever known. The suffering and injustice of life cut his sensitive nature to the quick. He knew by his own observation and experience that the current solution to the problem of suffering was a lie. It was not always the good who prospered, nor did calamity always befall the wicked. In spite of the comforting assurance of the Psalmist, he knew that he had seen the righteous forsaken, and his seed begging bread. He had heard their bitter cry ascending up to God apparently unheard and unanswered. Moreover, he had seen the wicked flourish like a green bay-tree. He had seen him gathered to his fathers in a ripe old age, respected by all who did not know him. If he had lived to-day he might have read his obituary notices, and have known that they lied.

Therefore, having a deep concern for the truth, he took an old traditional story, which had come down from remote antiquity, and he grafted upon it the greatest poem that was ever written.

If only we had the Book of Job in its original form, without the additions and alterations made by " pious " hands in the interests of orthodoxy, we should all recognise its greatness. No one has ever faced more fearlessly the facts of experience, and the problems which

those facts suggest. He seems to tear into shreds and tatters the conventional platitudes of his day and of ours.

We probably all know the outline of the story. The scene of the prologue is Heaven, where the sons of God present themselves before the Throne, and give an account of their doings. Amongst them is the Satan, whom we must be careful not to confuse with our "devil." The Satan of classical Hebrew literature was one of the Sons of God, whose duty it was to test men's characters.

Long experience has made him cynical, so that when God calls his attention to the righteousness and integrity of His Servant Job, the Satan suggests that Job has not served God for nought. His services have been well remunerated. God has only to take away his wealth, and Job will curse Him to His face. So God gives the Satan a free hand and in one day Job loses all his wealth ; his children, his slaves, and his flocks and herds. But far from cursing God, Job says " Naked I came into the world and naked I shall return. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Thus the Satan is foiled, but he is far from being at the end of his resources. So when next the Sons of God appear before the Throne and God again points out to the Satan the righteousness of His Servant Job, the Satan answers that he has not yet laid His Hand on Job himself. A man's possessions are things outside himself. Let Job's body be afflicted and then indeed he will curse God.

So Satan is again given a free hand with the one limitation that Job's life shall be spared. Job is afflicted with a loathsome disease, and so terrible are his sufferings that even his wife turns against him and tells him to " curse God and die." But Job reproves her with the words, " We have received good at the Lord's Hand,

and shall we not also receive evil ? ” So again the Satan is foiled and Job’s character is fully vindicated.

And now Job’s three friends come to visit him, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. These three friends are the representatives of conventional orthodoxy, and truly they represent it at its very best.

For seven long days and nights they sit in silence on an ash-heap, with the sufferer. One could not wish for better proof of sincere friendship and sympathy.

Then commence those wonderful cycles of speeches which form the body of the work. Job is the first speaker. In a passionate outburst of grief he curses the day of his birth, and expresses his longing for the shades of Sheol, “ where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.” “ Why is light given to a man whose way is hid and whom God hath hedged in ? ” Probably the pathos of this first speech of Job has never been equalled in literature.

To this Eliphaz answers with great tenderness and with arguments which are wonderfully convincing. Indeed, he is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and we often see and hear him quoted by pious people to-day, notwithstanding the fact that we find at the end of the book that he and his platitudes are condemned by God !

A less great artist would have put up a weak case in order the more effectually to demolish it. He would have made the friends ridiculous. But not so the author of the Book of Job. He is more than fair to conventional piety, and speaks for it far better than it could speak for itself. It is with infinite tact that Eliphaz reminds Job that in the days of his prosperity he had strengthened the weak hands and confirmed the feeble knees ; and now that misfortune has befallen him, it ill becomes him thus to give way.

Trouble does not come without reason. "Whoever perished being innocent, or where was the righteous cut off?" Misfortune is consequent on wrong-doing, and it is in love that God punishes our secret sins. "Happy is the man whom God correcteth. Therefore despise not thou the Chastening of the Almighty."

It is all so kindly meant that one is almost shocked at the violent way in which the sufferer flings back the old man's counsel. But the reason is that he has taken for granted that Job has sinned, whilst Job is absolutely assured of his innocence. Orthodoxy is always devoid of spiritual insight, else how could it be orthodox? And so, as the cycles of speeches proceed, the three friends more and more pointedly accuse Job of sin, and call him to repentance; whilst Job on his part passionately asserts his innocence, calling upon God to vindicate his character and even boldly accusing Him of injustice in His management of the world.

There is one exquisitely beautiful passage in which Job describes the life and death of a happy and prosperous man. He rejoices to see his children dance and play around him, and to hear their happy songs and laughter. Then, in extreme old age, he dies after a painless illness, and, says the poet, "the clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him." One is almost ready to exclaim with Balaam, "Let me also die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his." But wait a moment! Is it the righteous that he is speaking of? Read the passage a little more carefully, and you will find that he is describing the life and death of the wicked and unscrupulous. And a little further on, he describes the sad state of the poor whom this rich man has exploited. In the night time they go about naked and hungry, seeking for shelter, and in the day time they gather in the corn and tread out the wine for their rich exploiter, whilst they themselves are suffering from hunger and thirst and

destitution. What wonder that pious hands should have added the speeches of Elihu, and made many other alterations in the book of Job !

Finally God speaks out of the storm, and here the poetry of the book rises to its most majestic heights. The Almighty points out to Job that his knowledge is too limited thus to criticise God's rule over the Universe. With cutting irony, God points out that when the foundations of the world were laid, and the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy, Job was not there !

Then God brings before Job the physical phenomena of Nature ; land and sea, light and darkness, the ordered movements of the heavenly bodies, snow, hail, rain and ice, all of which Job utterly fails to understand, but which nevertheless, are under God's direction. All these things and many more are brought before Job to teach him the limitations of his knowledge.

But some may say that Science has knocked the bottom out of this argument. We now understand about these things. And there is a certain amount of truth in this suggestion. But if our boasted knowledge has robbed us of our sense of Wonder and Reverence and Awe, as we witness the works of the Creator ; if it has taken from us our sense of humility in the Presence of God, then we are far poorer than were our forefathers, who knew so much less than we. It is still true that " we live by admiration, hope and love."

But surely the discoveries of Science should have increased, not diminished, our admiration and our reverence. How small was the earth and how puny the universe known to those ancient Hebrews, compared with those known to us. The earth, so much smaller than that which we know, seemed to them the centre of the universe. The sky was an inverted basin, a solid hemisphere of blue, resting on the earth, and upon its

surface moved the sun, moon and stars, "the Heavenly hosts." The idea seems to us very childish, and yet it inspired their matchless poetry. We now know that the earth is but a little planet, circling round the sun, and that the sun is one of millions of suns. Can it be that the thought of such infinite immensity defies expression and paralyses our poetic genius ! Certain it is that our poetry is but poor stuff compared with theirs.

But God's Wisdom and Power are not more revealed in the infinitely great than in the infinitely little. The wonders revealed by the microscope are not less astonishing than those revealed by the telescope. So surely the argument should not be less telling to-day than it was in the fifth century B.C. On the contrary, it ought to appeal to us even more than it did to them !

Next, in a few master touches, God brings before Job the wonders of the animal kingdom ; the beasts and birds, which are all in need of His protecting care. Man is but one of a thousand of God's cares, yet His carefulness never fails.

But it is not the Argument of God ; it is the Vision of God that brings Job to his knees. At last he cries out in an agony of contrition, "I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

To me it is very striking that Job does not know now, any more than he did at first, the reason of his sufferings. We, of course, do know, because we have read the Prologue. Job is as ignorant as ever he was. But he has had a vision of God and that makes all the difference. He is now content, if God wills it so, to remain in ignorance and to suffer in ignorance. He repents in dust and ashes that he should ever have doubted God's wisdom or His Love.

And now once more the problem of suffering has become acute. Indeed, during the last six years it has been more acute than it has ever been before in the history of the world. Never was there so much unmerited suffering ; so much unpunished crime. We have seen innocent lads driven forth by wicked and unscrupulous governments to murder and be murdered, and that under circumstances of indescribable horror : whilst many of those who have been largely responsible for the making and continuance of the war, have been reaping rich harvests from the sufferings of their fellow-men. Everywhere men are asking the question, " How doth God know ? Is there knowledge with the Most High ? Behold these are the wicked and being always at ease they increase in riches." Nor is it the wicked and unscrupulous who begin to doubt whether there be a God. Far otherwise. The wicked and unscrupulous go to Church and Chapel in full assurance of Divine favour. These questions are being asked by the tender and kind-hearted ; those who are in truth the very salt of the earth. And all that conventional piety has done, has been to throw a cloak of righteousness over villainy, and to give religious sanction to the very worst of devilries. Of a truth the most soul-destroying thing under God's sun is conventional piety. Indeed I have no hesitation in saying that if there had been no Churches or Chapels, so that men had been compelled to judge for themselves what was right, the world would have been a sweeter and better place to live in. Peace will once more be preached from our pulpits when peace is popular !

To whom then must we turn in our search for some solution to this awful problem of suffering ? It is obviously no use to turn to conventional piety. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, with their pious platitudes, can no more help us than they could help Job.

Shall we then turn to Science ?

Science has taught us many things since the writer of the Book of Job penned his great drama, nor is it her fault that the greed and selfishness of men have turned her great discoveries into channels of destruction and death. Yet, with due apologies to Sir Oliver Lodge, I very much doubt whether Science has helped us, or can help us, to solve the problem of suffering. Certainly, up to now it has done far more to accentuate than to solve the problem. The solution demands spiritual insight, and this, though not incompatible with Science, is outside its sphere.

Shall we then, turn to Theology ?

Theology has, or thinks it has, made some discoveries. It has certainly given God two worlds to work in, this world and the next. So now it is not necessary, in order to vindicate God's justice, to make the debit and credit side of the ledger exactly balance in this life. Therefore it is easier for us, than for the writer of the Book of Job, to believe that there may be a solution even though we have not found it.

But I doubt whether Theology can really help us any more than Science. The day has long gone by when men were content to solve the problem by projecting themselves and their friends into a heaven of bliss and their opponents into a Hell of woe. With Job we are beginning to realise our ignorance. How, then, are we to solve the problem ?

Let me confess at once that I have no better solution to offer than that found by the writer of the Book of Job, a Vision of God. "I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee." When once we have realised by personal experience, the Love and Goodness of God, we can never again distrust His rule.

To many of us this vision has come through Jesus,

the Carpenter of Nazareth. The graphic description given us by the Synoptic writers, has enabled us to see Him as He trod the shores of Galilee, teaching men to love their enemies ; not only their personal enemies, but the enemies of their country ; the men who trampled under foot their rights and liberties ; the men who, in cold blood, slew their innocent babes ; the men who committed sacrilege and mingled the blood of the worshippers with their sacrifices. All these were to be loved because God, the Father of all men, loved good and bad alike, and sought to win them by indiscriminating beneficence. But not only did Christ teach this universal love ; He lived it. He healed the servant of the foreign War-Lord, who was keeping His fellow-countrymen in subjection. He refused to punish the Samaritan village that refused to entertain Him. He even healed the ear of the man who had come to arrest Him, and to carry Him to His doom.

But Christ did even more than live out His doctrine : He died for it. And on the Cross He prayed for the brutal Roman soldiers, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And in all this we see revealed the Infinite Love of God to the very worst of men.

But I have no wish to limit the channels through which the Vision may come. Before ever Christ was born, men had visions of God's goodness ; to some it came through the Hebrew Prophets ; to some it came through the Buddha and through other saints and sages of antiquity. But to many it came, and still comes, direct from God himself, for God has never left Himself without a witness. And just now, when the apostasy of the Churches has alienated so many from the Master, this direct Revelation of God is more than ever noteworthy. Many of the conscientious objectors said that they were not Christians. Nevertheless, they have had a Vision of God and have been willing to face

imprisonment and death, rather than be disobedient to that Heavenly Vision.

But to many of them and to many of us, the Vision has come, not so much as a Vision of God, as a Vision of God's Kingdom

The writer of the Book of Job was an Oriental, and the Orientals, being more spiritually-minded than ourselves, seem to have far more sense of God-consciousness than we. Yet we, too, have seen visions and have dreamed dreams. Not a few of us have seen a vision of a Kingdom of God from which greed and selfishness have been for ever banished. A Kingdom of God in which "I" and "me" and "mine" have been replaced by "we" and "us" and "ours"—a Kingdom of God in which not merely the necessities of life, but the very best things of life, shall be within the reach of every child ; a Kingdom of God in which men work, not for wages nor for dividends, but for the love of their work and for the love of their fellow-men ; a Kingdom of God in which Love shall be the only law and the only compelling force ; a Kingdom of Universal Brotherhood in which the whole human race shall live together as one family in full recognition of God as the Universal Father of all mankind.

Surely such a vision as this should inspire our enthusiasm ! Is it not worth working for ? Is it not worth suffering for ? Is it not worth dying for ? And as we cast aside our selfish ambitions and seek to lay the foundations of this new and better world, we too may join the Choir Invisible, and hear again the morning stars sing together, and all the Sons of God shout for joy.

CHAPTER VII

ATONEMENT

THE subject of my address is Atonement ; or, as the obvious etymology of the word suggests that we should pronounce it, at-one-ment.

Now, I make no pretence to scholarship, but I think that I am quite safe in saying that the worship of all races of mankind, even the most primitive, has been the expression of a desire to be at one with God, or with gods. So that when Augustine said, "Thou has made us for Thyself and our souls are restless till they rest in Thee," he gave perfect expression to a spiritual experience which must be well nigh, if not quite, universal. And I want us now to consider this much longed-for atonement, in order that we may the better understand what it meant to primitive mankind and what it ought to mean to us to-day.

We have already seen, in the chapter on "Worship," that the act of worship was always associated with the rite of sacrifice ; and I like to think that the late Prof. Robertson Smith was right when he taught that the earliest thought associated with the rite of sacrifice was not the thought of expiation, but the thought of simple fellowship, or at-one-ment.

But, alas ! This simple thought of fellowship and communion was not the only thought associated with the rite of sacrifice. Whether it was, or was not, the earliest thought it was certainly the purest and noblest. But another thought early entered in, which had no

living germ of truth capable of fructifying into noble and worthy thoughts of God. When some of these Arab tribes forsook their nomadic life and settled down to agriculture and commerce, the tribesmen began to acquire private property, and the flocks and herds which had at one time belonged to the tribe as a whole, began to belong to individual members of those tribes. And so the thought developed that Baal had his private property and the sacrifice became a gift or bribe to Baal.

And, later still, when a sense of sin developed and became strong, the sacrifice became a bribe to propitiate an offended deity. Thus do we see that the advent of private property corresponded to a degradation of religious thought.

Now, it is easy to see that all such expiatory ideas associated with the rite of sacrifice were utterly false and degrading, and, as we should expect, we find the Old Testament full of magnificent protests by prophets and psalmists, against such unworthy thoughts of God—"Will the Lord be pleased," says Micah, "with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" And then he appeals to the common-sense of his hearers. "He hath shown thee O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

And yet, strange as it may seem, these expiatory ideas have dominated Christian theology ever since the days of Augustine, and we are only just beginning to shake ourselves free from them, and to realise how much we have dishonoured God by attributing to Him anything so utterly derogatory to His character. It seems the more surprising that these unworthy thoughts should have crept into Christian theology when we

realise that they are conspicuous by their absence from the pages of the New Testament, and that where, in one or two places, they might seem to appear, it is due to a mis-translation or to a misunderstanding of the author's original meaning.

But, for the most part, these expiatory ideas crept in through a too literal interpretation of metaphor. The Bible, like all Eastern writings, is full of poetic imagery, which we more prosaic Western nations have been far too ready to translate into the dogmas of prose. Thus, for example, Christ spoke of His work as a ransom, and no metaphor could have been more exquisitely appropriate. His disciples must have felt its force, and could not have misunderstood our Lord's meaning. They must have felt that they had been under the dominion of sin, and that Christ had freed them from its bondage. The effect of His work had indeed been that of a ransom. But Augustine, with a cruel logic, translated this exquisite metaphor into the appalling doctrine that the blood of Jesus Christ was a price paid to Satan to free us from his power.

The metaphor was true and appropriate, the doctrine was false and utterly revolting.

Later still, Anselm, the great and noble Archbishop of Canterbury, taught a forensic atonement, based on feudal law. Anselm lived in feudal times, and based his theory on the law with which he was familiar. He taught that man is God's vassal, and owes to God absolute obedience which he has utterly failed to pay ; but God became incarnate in Christ, who then paid the debt, and thus did God's love give Christ as a sacrifice to God's justice.

There was a great deal more in Anselm's theory that concerned the number of fallen angels which had to be made good by a corresponding number of God's elect in order that the symmetry of Heaven might be restored.

But, in the light of scientific thought, all such theological speculation appears childish in the extreme, and this part of Anselm's theory we rarely hear about.

Later still, Calvin of Geneva further elaborated Anselm's substitution theory into a hard, legal system, which we still know as Calvinism. But notwithstanding the fact that these theories originated with some of the noblest and best of God's saints, and that they have been held by good men for all these centuries, I have no hesitation in saying that scripturally they are unsound, and ethically they are immoral. They seem to me to be like the stained-glass windows of a cathedral. When we are inside the building we can only see the patterns and pictures into which the stained glass has been wrought by art and man's device, and it is difficult to realise that the truth of God lies behind them and is obscured by them.

Let us, then, leave this cathedral, this temple made with hands, with its close and fetid atmosphere, its dim religious light, and let us breathe for awhile the bracing air of the mountain tops, viewing the truth of God in the light of Christ.

In the fifteenth chapter of Luke we read a story which Christ Himself told to illustrate His view of the atonement—the reconciliation of God and Man. It is a story so full of human tenderness and Divine compassion that I often find it difficult to read, because my eyes fill with tears, and a lump rises in my throat. It tells of a father who had two sons, and the younger one said to his father, "give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," and he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living. He was not driven out of doors, but wilfully he went his way. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be

in want. And he joined himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him into the fields to feed swine. And he fain would have been filled with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself (hitherto he had not been true to himself, or to that divine sonship which was his inalienable right) he said : " How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, whilst I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants." So he arose and came to his father—and when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said : " Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the urgency of the father's affection forbade the son to say more, and the speech which he had prepared so carefully was never finished. For the father bade the servants to " bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

There was no need that anyone should seek to alter the attitude of the father towards the son—that was what it always had been, an attitude of infinite love and tender compassion. To be sure the lad had wandered far from the path of duty and of honour, but the father still loved him with the same inalienable affection, and that, not for the sake of his elder brother, but for the boy's own sake, because he was his son. No amount of sin, no depth of degradation, could alter or destroy that glorious relationship. There was no need for the older brother to plead for the younger. Still less was there

any need for the older brother to bear the younger brother's punishment in order that the father's sense of justice might be satisfied. It was not his sense of justice, but his love that demanded satisfaction ; and that is why, all the time the son was away, the father watched anxiously for his return, so that when he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him, and the twain were at one. Here, then, we have the atonement ; not the atonement of the theologians, to be sure, but the atonement as taught by Christ Himself. Could anything be more exquisitely simple ? Could anything be more absolutely true ? Whenever anything has stood in the way of man's reconciliation with God, it has not been God's sense of justice, but man's unwillingness to return.

We often hear people speak of " God's plan of Salvation," as though salvation were a maze or a difficult puzzle requiring a chart or plan in order that we may find our way about in it. But we read of no such plan of salvation in Scripture.

Who fathoms the eternal thought ?
 Who talks of scheme and plan ?
 The Lord is God—He needeth not
 The poor device of man.

In the Scriptures we read of a " way of salvation," and we are told that it is so simple that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. So simple is it that the youngest child who knows what it is to err from the path of rectitude, and to return to find his earthly parent with open arms ready to receive him, can understand, and often does understand, God's way of salvation quite as well, if not better, than the most learned theologian.

I say to thee, do thou repeat
 To the first man thou mayest meet
 In lane, highway, or open street

That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love,
Broad as the blue sky above.

And ere thou leave him, say thou this,
Yet one more word, they only miss
The winning of that final bliss,

Who will not hold it true that love,
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
And that in it we live and move.

Is there, then, no truth whatever in the old theories of the atonement? Was there no atoning efficacy in the sacrifice of Christ? If He did not die for our sins, why should He have died at all? Yes! There was indeed atoning efficacy in the sacrifice of Christ. Like the suffering servant of Yahweh "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." If there had been no truth in the old theories of the atonement they could never have survived all these centuries. They survived on account of that which was true in them; not on account of what was false. And to me it seems very striking evidence of the importance of that truth, that it should have been able to keep alive these old theories which so grossly misrepresented it.

What, then, is the truth that these old theories caricature? Now in order that we may be able to answer this question correctly, we must put aside all our theological dogmas and fall back upon the facts of experience. This is how science teaches us that we must approach all difficult problems, and this problem is no exception to the rule.

Apart from all questions of theology and metaphysics, it is intrinsic in the very nature of sin to add to the world's great load of sorrow and suffering; and it is equally intrinsic in the very nature of righteousness to add the

world's "sum total" of joy and gladness. Right and wrong are not the arbitrary dicta of theologians. Speaking generally, sin brings suffering to someone or other, and that is why it is sin; whilst righteousness brings happiness, and that is why it is righteousness. Sin introduces discord into the Divine harmony, whilst by atonement we mean the doing away with the discord, the restoration of the harmony, the at-one-ment of God and man.

And if this be so, then anything like righteousness and loving self sacrifice which tend in this direction to bring joy and gladness and make things more at one with the Divine Will—must have in it some measure of atoning efficacy.

But let me give you one or two illustrations of what I mean, for it is so much easier to understand a concrete example than to follow an abstract argument.

I well remember some twenty years ago witnessing the death of a man in good position in society who took his own life. At the time he was supposed to have been wealthy, but in reality he had got into financial difficulties; and, in order to extricate himself from them, he acted in a way that was far from honourable; and then, rather than face the consequences of what he had done, he committed suicide, leaving his wife and children to fight the battle of life alone. I shall never forget the terrible scene which followed. It is written indelibly on my memory, and I well remember that, as we talked the matter over afterwards, we anticipated the most disastrous consequences for the children. But as soon as the first shock of the terrible calamity was over, the mother set to work to make a living for her children. Though she had been brought up in the lap of luxury, and had scarcely known what it was to do a hard day's work, she started dressmaking, and took in lodgers, and by working day and night she succeeded in giving

the children a good education. What she suffered it is impossible for us to realise, but by her sufferings she saved her children from degradation, and turned them out into the world useful and self-respecting citizens. I used to know them well, and was proud to know them. Here, then, we have an example of vicarious suffering—the innocent suffering for the guilty—the mother suffering for the father's sin. But not only was it vicarious suffering : it was obviously vicarious suffering which had in it no small measure of atoning efficacy. By the mother's sacrifice the children were saved from ruin and were made useful and self-respecting citizens. The harmony, jeopardised by sin, was in a large measure restored.

Let me give you another illustration.

Many years ago I knew a married couple who fell through drink, and other more terrible forms of vice, and their children's prospects seemed ruined. But the grandmother of the children rose to the occasion. She sacrificed the leisure and comfort of old age, and a very real sacrifice it was, and brought up a second family. Here again, we have vicarious suffering—the grandmother suffering for the parents' sin. Again it was vicarious suffering which obviously had in it a very large measure of atoning efficacy. By their grandmother's sacrifice the children were saved from the most terrible degradation imaginable, and are now filling useful and honourable positions in society. I know them well, and am proud to know them.

But why should I multiply illustrations ? Similar examples must occur to the minds of everyone ; for, as a matter of fact, vicarious suffering is a universal law of our being from which it is impossible for one of us to escape. Apart from all doctrines of theology, men do not suffer alone for their own sins. The punishment is always borne in part, and often entirely, by the innocent :

And children gather as their own
The harvest that the dead have sown,
The dead, forgotten and unknown.

How terrible then is the sinfulness of sin ! What a coward is the sinner !

When a boy at school breaks the laws of the establishment and bravely bears his whipping, we are all inclined to look leniently at his misdeeds. There is in them something of the heroic. But supposing that boy allows the punishment to fall on others, what then ? The heroic element at once disappears and we call that boy a coward. When I was at school, we should have called him a "cad." And this is a true picture of the man who breaks the laws of God in that larger school, the University of Experience, in which we are all of us undergraduates. Again I say, How terrible is the sinfulness of sin ! What a coward is the sinner !

It is not always easy to see the atoning efficacy of vicarious suffering. Sometimes the suffering is borne actively and voluntarily as in the examples that I have given you, and its atoning efficacy is not far to seek. But oftener still, it is borne passively and involuntarily, and its atoning efficacy is then far more difficult to recognise. It is not always easy to see that suffering tends to draw men, by bonds of mutual sympathy, nearer one to another, and to their God and Father. But I have faith to believe that no suffering is purposeless,

That not a worm is cloven in vain,
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
But that subserves another's gain.

But however that may be, it remains a fact of experience that men do not atone for their own sins. Even if they would do so, they cannot. Atonement is always made in large measure by others. The wise have to

atone for the folly of the foolish ; the generous have to atone for the greed of the selfish ; the sympathetic have to atone for the harshness of the unfeeling ; the righteous have to atone for the sins of the wicked. And it was natural, indeed it was logically inevitable, that the all-wise, the all-generous, the all-sympathetic and perfect Son of Man should make atonement for the sin of the world. Here, it seems to me, we have no inscrutable mystery. That Christ should die and make atonement for sin was natural and inevitable.

And if this be the philosophy of the atonement, as I believe it to be, what then should be our relationship towards it ? Are we to sit with folded hands resting upon the " finished work of Christ " ? The finished work of Christ ! Look at the so-called " Christian " nations of Europe. See them armed to the teeth, watching each other with jealous rivalry lest one should steal a march upon another ! Or look nearer home. See the condition of our own streets—the poverty, the drunkenness, the degradation, the prostitution at our very doors. Or look again at the infantile mortality in the working class neighbourhoods of our large cities, where out of every hundred children that are born, more than twenty die ere ever they are twelve months old ! And more than half of them die before they are five years old ! I tell you the work of Christ is not finished, and those who speak of " the finished work of Christ " must either close their eyes to facts, or speak in sarcasm.

And now, for a true view of Christ's atoning work, and our relationship towards it, let us turn for a moment to the first chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians. Here we find the Apostle speaking of the sufferings of Christ, and how it was the Father's good pleasure that reconciliation or atonement should be made through the blood of His cross ; and this thought of the sufferings

of our Lord turns the apostle's mind to a consideration of his own sufferings, and he tells his disciples at Colosse that he rejoices in them, because they fill up that which was lacking in the sufferings of Christ.

We are so accustomed to think of the atoning sacrifice of Christ as something complete in itself, that the idea of there being anything lacking that has to be filled up by us, seems at first sight quite foreign to our notions, and if it had not been the apostle Paul who gave expression to the thought, we should have been inclined, I think, to dismiss it as being heterodox, if not impious. But I am very glad that the apostle did give expression to the thought, for I feel sure that it is true and helpful, and the more we study the apostle's writings the more shall we find it to be in harmony with the rest of his teaching.

What, then, should be our relationship to the atoning sacrifice of Christ? Are we to sit with folded hands and say, "Jesus paid it all"? I tell you that Jesus did not pay it all, and it is our glorious privilege, our high calling in Christ Jesus, to pay a share. The point that I wish to drive home is this—the part that we are playing in Christ's atoning work is not, and cannot be, a passive one. We are not merely accepting or rejecting the atonement offered. Whether we will or no, the part that we are each playing is far nobler, or far more despicable, than that. We are either co-workers with Christ, filling up that which was lacking in His sufferings; or we are adding to the world's great load of sin and wickedness for which atonement has to be made, and made by others. Which is it? Which shall it be? Is not the world's great load of sorrow and suffering heavy enough, that we should make the coward's choice, to sin and sin, and let others bear the penalty. Let me remind you again of what I said earlier on in my address, that it is intrinsic in the very nature of sin to bring suffering;

not to the sinner, but to the innocent ; and most of all, as a rule, to those who are nearest and dearest to the sinner ; and so perhaps, most of all to God Himself. But I wish to keep close to the facts of experience, which we all know enough to verify. It is in the nature of sin to bring suffering. It was sin that nailed Jesus Christ to the cross of Calvary. It was sin that placed upon His brow the crown of thorns. It was sin that pierced His side. Nor was Christ alone crucified for sin. Every pure and noble soul that ever trod this earth has, in a sense, been crucified for sin. Every noble brow has worn its crown of thorns, and that because of sin. Every tender heart that has ever throbbed in sympathy for its fellows has been pierced, and pierced by sin. And if we could but hear the world's great cry of anguish as it ascends up to the throne of God, we should never again speak lightly, or think lightly, of sin.

We hear, it may be, the satisfied chuckle of the shareholder as he receives his dividend. God hears the cry of the labourer who is striving to bring up his family respectably on less than a living wage.

We hear, it may be, the coarse jest, the foul oath, and the ribald laughter of the pot-house. God hears the cry of women and children for bread.

We hear, it may be, the loud and vulgar laugh of the woman in the street. God hears the bitter cry of the girl's mother weeping for a daughter worse than dead ; and it may be He hears also the low moan of the stunted and diseased infant who has been damned rather than born into a world of wickedness and vice. And I have longed that the world's great cry of suffering may reach our ears also, and may so touch our hearts as to make us willing to drink of the cup that Christ drank of, even if need be, to the bitter dregs of death.

Why is it that good people will persist in speaking of the sacrifice of Christ as though it had nothing whatever to do with anything that went before, or with anything that followed after. The sacrifice of Christ was no isolated event in the world's history. It was the supreme and perfect type of all true sacrifice. Thus when the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews said, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission," he stated, perhaps without fully understanding what he said, an historical fact which we all know enough to verify. For across every page of history that is worthy to be read there is written in letters of blood the word "sacrifice." The sacrifice of the strong for the weak ; of the pure and noble for the vile and degraded ; of the fittest to survive for the least fit. Every real advance that mankind has made has been made at the price of blood. Every good gift that man has won for his fellow-men has been won at the cost of blood. It has never been given to man to soar on eagle's pinions. It has ever been with torn hands and bleeding feet that the human race has climbed upwards to heights of moral excellence and spiritual vision ; and, of a truth, without shedding of blood, there has been no remission. It was true long before Christ shed His precious blood on Calvary ; it was true long before the blood of bulls and goats was shed on Hebrew altars. It is still true to-day ; and if we imagine that Christ hung on the cross merely to save us pain, we have missed the whole meaning of the Cross of Christ. He hung there, not to save us pain, but to make us willing to take up the cross and follow Him.

We are surrounded on every side by degradation too deep to fathom, by suffering too terrible for words. And the sufferers are holding out their hands to us, imploring our aid. Children there are, ill-clad and ill-fed, growing up in an atmosphere of vice, whose little

lips are early taught to speak of things of which no child of tender years should know—these little ones are holding out their hands to us for help.

Strong men there are, the slaves of drink and lust, with passions far stronger than they can control. Coarse and brutal they may be, but none the less they are our brothers, and if we had been brought up amidst the same surroundings, we should have been coarse and brutal, too. And these, our brethren, hold out their toil-worn hands to us for help.

And there are fallen women, too, who have strong claims upon us—often more sinned against than sinning—the victims of abominable social conditions for which you and I are, each in his own measure, responsible. Christ, the true type of manhood and chivalry, honoured womanhood, even in the fallen. And these, our sisters, hold out their hands to us for help.

And there is One who ever identified Himself with suffering humanity, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities ; He is holding out His pierced hands to us, claiming our sympathy and our service.

“ For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that He died for all that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.”

CHAPTER VIII

CHRIST AND THE PHARISEES :

A CONFLICT OF IDEALS

SCHOLARS often tell us that it is impossible to understand Old Testament history, without knowing something of the geographical position of Palestine. But not only did the geographical position of Palestine in large measure determine the history of the Old Testament; it also had considerable bearing upon the history of the New. Palestine was the Belgium of the Old World. We often hear Belgium spoken of as "the cockpit of Europe," and this unenviable position held by Belgium amongst the Empires of the New World, was held by Palestine amongst the Empires of the Old.

It was situated on the great trade route, and military road, connecting two enormous and powerful empires. They were not always the same two empires, but whichever they happened to be, they were jealous rivals one of the other. When not actually at war, they were at bitter enmity; so it is not difficult to understand that this little buffer state had not an easy nor a happy time of it. Whenever there was trouble in the ancient world, Palestine was certain to be involved. Now, as you can imagine would be the case, this geographical position did a great deal to develop a very high ideal of heroic patriotism, which, in any case, would have been striking; but, wedded as it was to a high spiritual ideal, was magnificent.

Indeed Old Testament History consists very largely of a series of wonderful deliverances wrought by great religious heroes, and it is this that makes it so fascinating.

The history begins with the story of Abraham, travelling from Ur of the Chaldees to Palestine. He would travel along this great military road, leading northwards up the Euphrates valley, then westwards by Damascus, and then southwards to Palestine. That is to say he travelled along exactly the same road that our own troops traversed under General Allenby. There is no other possible road.

I do not suppose that any scholar of repute would regard the story of Abraham as strictly historical, but probably there is this much historical truth in it ; that at least one of the tribes which eventually united to form "the Children of Israel" migrated from Chaldea, in the near neighbourhood of Babylon, along this great trade route to Palestine, eventually becoming enslaved in Egypt.

Then comes the first of the great deliverances : the deliverance wrought by Moses, the national hero of the Jews. And after him, one naturally thinks of such heroic names as Joshua, Gideon, and many others ; and later still Saul and David, in whose reigns the country was finally conquered, and the Children of Israel settled in the promised land. But it was a very unsettled settlement. On the North was the great Empire of Assyria, notable as being the most brutal military power the world has ever known. It was the type of militarism—devoid of art, devoid of culture, devoid of pity—but with a perfect genius for organised devilry.

Over and over again Assyrian armies made their way southward along this great military road to attack Egypt. In the reign of Tiglath Pileser Damascus fell. In the reign of Sargon Samaria fell, and the whole population of the northern Kingdom of Israel was carried away into a captivity from which they never returned. And, later still, Jerusalem too, was invaded by Sennacherib, and was only saved from the same appalling fate

by the heroism of Isaiah. Humanly speaking, it is safe to say that the whole religious history of Europe would have been completely changed, had Sennacherib succeeded. We should never have had our Old Testament, and therefore we should never have had our New.

But Assyria was already showing signs of decadence and Pharaoh-Necho, King of Egypt, taking advantage of the weakening power of Assyria, marched northward with an enormous army along this great military road to attack Egypt's ancient enemy. And now there happened the greatest tragedy in the history of the Jews. Josiah, with a heroism closely akin to madness, led the little army of Israel against this great Egyptian host. Josiah, "the King after God's own heart," was slain on the field of Megiddo, and the army of Israel was annihilated. Recently we have heard a great deal about "Armageddon." Now the word Armageddon is a corruption of the word Mediddo, and the idea of an Armageddon is derived from the fact of this great tragedy.

Pharaoh was afterwards defeated by the Babylonians at the battle of Carchemish, but this was only the prelude to Babylonian invasions. Babylonian armies began to march along this old military road until the whole population of the Southern Kingdom of Judah was carried captive to Babylon.

Then came Cyrus the Persian along the great military road ; but he came as a deliverer, and allowed the Jews to return to their own land. Then follows the heroic story of the reforms of Ezra, and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, when the Jews wrought with a trowel in one hand, and a sword in the other ! A truly inspiring story of heroism.

Now it is important that we should remember that it was at this heroic time of Jewish history that the ideals of the Pharisees first took definite shape. We shall remember that the most essential part of the reforms

of Ezra was that the Jews were to separate themselves from their heathen neighbours. The word "Pharisee" means "separated," and although the Pharisees did not yet exist as a sect, it is easy to recognise their ideal of heroic patriotism, combined with a sense of religious superiority and isolation.

The next great conqueror to march along this old military road was Alexander the Great : and now we come to the Greek period, which was by far the most heroic and most fascinating of all. Unfortunately, however, very few people know anything about it, and this is the more deplorable because a knowledge of Maccabean history throws a flood of much needed light upon the Gospels. The reason why so few people know about this most important epoch is that the First Book of Maccabees failed to gain admittance into the Canon of Scripture. I often think that if only the First Book of Maccabees had got in, instead of the Book of Daniel, a vast improvement would have been made in the sanity of the religious thought of Europe. But the illustrious name associated with the Book of Daniel secured its admission into the Canon, and the First Book of Maccabees was left out, notwithstanding the fact that it is far more trustworthy as history than any of the so-called historical books of the Old Testament !

Alexander himself left the Jews almost unmolested. Why this was so is uncertain. Josephus tells the story of a wonderful dream Alexander had. He dreamed that he saw the High Priest coming towards him in gorgeous apparel, surrounded by other Priests in white raiment, and when he awoke in the morning what he had dreamed actually came to pass. Whether there is any truth in the story we do not know. But it is certain that Alexander treated the Jews with an amount of consideration and respect which was in strange contrast to his treatment of the neighbouring Phœnician ports.

After the death of Alexander, however, his great empire was divided amongst his generals, and after much fighting between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucidæ of Syria—much marching and counter-marching along this great military road—Palestine at last came under the sway of a Syrian tyrant named Antiochus Epiphanes. Now Antiochus had been brought up at Rome, and there he had acquired a great enthusiasm for Greek culture. So he determined that when he came to the throne his empire should be unified : it should be Greek in language, in religion, and in culture ; therefore the Jews must be Hellenised. He built a Greek gymnasium outside the walls of the Temple in Jerusalem, where Jewish youths of noble birth might practise Greek athletics. He forbade the worship of Jehovah, and the performance of all Jewish rites on pain of death. And, to crown these indignities, he built a small altar to the Greek god Zeus on top of the High Altar of Burnt Offering in the Temple at Jerusalem. This was “ the abomination that maketh desolate ” which we read of in the Book of Daniel. The Book of Daniel was written at this time, and although it is not strictly historical, yet with the help of scholarship, a great deal of fascinating history may be extracted from it. Take for example the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. When threatened by Nebuchadnezzar with a raging fiery furnace, because they refused to fall down and worship the golden image which the King had set up—they replied that they had faith to believe that their God Jehovah could and would deliver them ; but they added, “ *If not*, be it known unto thee, O King, we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” This heroic tale, though not true of the Babylonian period, did actually represent the attitude of many Jewish youths at this time of awful persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. Gladly did

they face the fiery furnace of persecution and death, rather than be false to the religion of their fathers. Terrible were the sufferings of the loyal Jews during this time of persecution ; but their cause seemed hopeless until a priest of Modin named Mattathias, a name which should always be held in reverence, when commanded by an officer of Antiochus to offer sacrifice to the Greek Gods, slew the officer and escaped to the hills. There he set up the standard of insurrection, and was soon joined by his five noble sons, and an ever-increasing number of loyal Jews. At first they fought entirely on the defensive, a mere guerilla warfare ; but as their numbers increased they boldly took the field.

Mattathias died before his insurrection achieved success, but his place was taken by one of his sons, Judas Maccabeus, a man of sterling character and magnificent heroism. Over and over again did Antiochus send huge armies, led by his bravest generals, against the Jews ; and over and over again were the armies of Antiochus utterly defeated, until at last those brave heroes won for themselves and for their fellow countrymen civil and religious liberty.

Now the men who gathered round Mattathias and his son Judas Maccabeus called themselves the "Hassidim," or "godly," and it is important for us to remember that these "Hassidim" became afterwards the sect of the Pharisees. Indeed, they were the Pharisees who, a century and a half later, became the most bitter opponents of Jesus Christ. Nor was this an accident. The Pharisees of our Lord's day were not unworthy of their noble ancestors. We think of these men as conscious hypocrites, because we read that Jesus said to them "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." But I like to think that this condemnation did not sound as harsh to the hearers of Jesus, as it sounds to us. The meaning of the word translated "hypocrite" is

actor. When I have watched the priests in a Continental Cathedral, I have often thought, and sometimes said, "They seem to be acting." By that I did not of course mean to suggest that the priests were conscious hypocrites. That would in deed have been uncharitable. I simply meant that it looked to me like a performance.

Now the formal religion of the Pharisees was the perfect antithesis of the religion of spontaneous kindness and benevolence taught by Jesus, and we can well understand how He might say to them, "Alas, for you, scribes and pharisees, actors." When we condemn wholesale a large class of men, *en masse*, we always do a cruel injustice, and it is never fair to judge of men by the verdict of their enemies. When the Gospels were written the Pharisees were the principal persecutors of the Early Church, and it is easy to imagine that if the Gospels had been written later, during the Neronian persecution, we might have had severe censures passed upon the Romans. Certain it is that if we study the history of the Pharisees from any source other than the Gospels we find that they were men of high ideals, who were ready to make great sacrifices for those ideals. Jesus Himself said of them that they compassed sea and land to make a convert, and men who do this are something better than conscious hypocrites. The Pharisees were the Evangelical section of the Church of their day, and they had all the virtues, and some of the vices, of the Evangelical Churches of our own time. They were narrow and intolerant but they were nothing if not sincere. Moreover, forty years later, they showed by their defence of Jerusalem that they had lost nothing of the courage of their forefathers. Their defence of the holy city, was surely not the less heroic because from the first it was hopeless.

After the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, the sect of the Sadducees ceased to exist. The

religion of the Sadducees was entirely dependent upon temple worship, so that when the Temple was destroyed, Sadducism was destroyed with it, and all that remained was Pharisaism. So the religion of the Jews to-day is Pharisaism pure and simple. And a religion which has maintained the nationality of a homeless race for two thousand years, and has maintained amongst that homeless people the highest standard of morality of any nation in Europe, that religion must surely be something better than hypocrisy ! But we will return to the " Hassidim."

The liberties won by their heroism were short-lived, as religion won by the sword is apt to be. It was not long before the Jews came once more under another cruel tyranny, the tyranny of Rome. How cruel that tyranny was we are helped to understand by sidelights thrown upon it in the Gospels. Thus there is the story of the Slaughter of the Innocents, which, if not actually historical, shows the kind of thing that occasionally happened. Then again, there is that wonderfully illuminating passage concerning " those Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices." This was the kind of outrage to which the Jews were not unfrequently subjected. But their faith never failed. Their minds reverted back to the glorious days of Judas and the marvellous deliverance that he wrought. And they looked forward also to a still greater Deliverer who had been promised to them—a Messiah : a man with supernatural powers, who should lead a victorious insurrection against the hated tyranny of Rome, and establish a Jewish Monarchy, " the Kingdom of God," with Himself at the head.

When we think of Messianic passages in the Scriptures, our minds are apt to turn to the Suffering Servant poems, which we find incorporated in the Book of Isaiah ; and expecially do we think of the last and greatest of these Suffering Servant poems,

which speaks of the Suffering Servant as a lamb brought to the slaughter and as a sheep before his shearers. But it is only fair to the Jews to remember that they did not regard these poems as Messianic. They believed that the Suffering Servant was their own Nation, and all modern scholarship tends to show that, so far as exegesis is concerned, the Jews were right, and the Early Christians were wrong. Their Scriptures, both canonical and apocryphal, gave them some right to expect the Messiah as a military hero, like those who had preceded him, but far greater than any before : one who would lead the armies of Israel in a glorious campaign against their conquerors, and establish a Messianic Kingdom, over which he himself would reign. Many a Jewish youth, goaded to desperation by the cruelties of the proud oppressor, persuaded himself that he was the promised Deliverer, and led a band of zealots against the pitiless power of Rome, only to suffer crucifixion. Do not imagine for a moment that Jesus was the only crucified Messiah—He was one of many.

Then the Pharisees heard of another Messiah of very different calibre—a young prophet, preaching on the shores of Galilee and attracting great crowds, not only by His preaching, but by the marvellous miracles that He wrought. This surely was the promised Deliverer who should lead a Jewish army against their hated enemy. So they flocked to hear His message ; but instead of doing as they expected, and as they had some right to expect, Jesus told them to love their enemies, to bless those who cursed them, to do good to those who hated them, and to pray for those who despitefully used them and persecuted them. What ? Love the Huns ! Away with such a fellow from the earth ! And so they crucified Him ; and I venture to say that we should have done no less.

The other Messiahs, “ false Messiahs ” we call them,

though it is they whom we have followed, were crucified by the Romans, as fanatical patriots and troublesome leaders of insurrection. They took the sword, and perished by the sword, and that was the end of their mission. Jesus too, was crucified, but He was crucified by His own nation as a pro-Roman, and a traitor. He died on the Cross for the enemies of His Country, and we believe that we have as yet seen only the beginning of His glorious work of Redemption.

That it was not without a severe struggle that Jesus gave up all thoughts of becoming the war-like Messiah of Jewish tradition, and chose the path of non-resistance, and love at any price, that led Him to Calvary, is well shown in the dramatic story of the Temptation. It is evident that at the time of His Baptism He had a stupendous and epoch-making Spiritual experience, and it is probable that it was then that He first realised that He was to be the promised Messiah. And the all-important question arose—what kind of a Messiah was He to be? The traditional Messiah who should lead the armies of Israel against the hated oppression of Rome? This was the line of least resistance, for evidently it was what was expected of Him, and He must have felt how well qualified He was for such an undertaking. So He retired to the wilderness to be alone with God, and there He had a wonderful Vision. Before Him He seemed to see all the kingdoms of the world, and the Tempter said to Him "All these will I give Thee and the power of Them, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." Evidently He felt in that supreme moment that it was within His power to become a world-conqueror; an earthly ruler over a political Kingdom; and what a glorious reign His would have been! But He realised another thing. He realised that the power to dominate our fellow-men is in the gift of Satan. It was the Devil who said: "All these things will I give Thee, and the

power of them." And having realised this, His answer was emphatic and final : " Get thee behind Me, Satan ; for it is written, ' Thou shalt worship the Lord Thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.' " And having once decided as to which ideal He would choose, He never wavered in His loyalty to it. And how true was the Spiritual Insight of Jesus. Surely of all gifts, the power to dominate our fellow-men is the most damning and the most damnable. The Gift of God is not the power to dominate, but the power to serve.

But to decide which ideal He would follow was one thing—to convert His disciples to the same ideal was another. On one occasion at least, we are told that His followers tried to take Him by force and make Him a King,—the Messianic Ruler that they wanted. And when they utterly failed, " many went back and walked no more with Him." Even His most intimate disciples hoped to the very end that He would assume the rôle of a Conquering Hero, such as tradition led them to expect. This is well illustrated in the story of the last sad journey from Cæsarea Phillipi to Jerusalem. The danger-clouds were gathering thick and fast around the little group, and when He asked them, " but whom say ye that I am ? " the impetuous Peter replied " Thou art the Christ," *i.e.*, the Messiah. What he meant by that, and what the Disciples understood Him to mean, is clearly shown in the sequel. Jesus at once proceeded to tell them that He was not going up to Jerusalem to be crowned as a Jewish Messiah, but to be executed as a criminal. Whereupon Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, " Far be it from Thee, Lord. This shall never be done unto Thee." Then Jesus addressed to him the same words that He had spoken to the Tempter in the wilderness, when he suggested to Him the rôle of a conquering Messianic Hero, " Get thee behind Me, Satan."

Later on He asked the disciples what they had been

talking about during their journey, and it transpired that they had been quarrelling as to which of them should be greatest when the campaign had been fought and won, and the Messianic Kingdom established. So He told them that whoever would be first in His Kingdom should be last of all ; and, taking a little child in His arms He warned them that unless they flung aside their selfish ambitions and became as that little child, they never could enter the Kingdom at all.

But even after that, we find James and John coming secretly to Jesus, and asking Him that they might sit, one on His right hand and one on His left, occupying the places of greatest honour in His government, when the Kingdom was established. Sadly He told them, "Ye know not what ye ask." And then followed the question, "Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I drink of and to be baptised with the Baptism that I am baptised with ?" And, thinking only of the hardships of the campaign, they glibly answered, "We are able." Whereupon He sadly told them, "Ye shall indeed drink of the Cup that I drink of, and be baptised with the Baptism that I am baptised with, but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give." Then, when the other disciples heard that James and John had gone behind their backs, trying to steal a march upon them, they were very angry. And Jesus called them all to Him, and pointed out that the world-conquerors lorded it over the conquered races ; but in His Kingdom, all that would be reversed, and those would be accounted greatest who served most humbly.

But in spite of all Christ's teaching, only two of His disciples seem to have realised the futility of their hopes : these were Judas and the doubting Thomas. The one has ever stood as the type of infidelity, whilst the other ought by right, to have equally stood as the type of true Faith. The crushing of all his ambitious hopes filled

Judas with hatred, malice and all uncharitableness, and he betrayed his Master.

Thomas was equally hopeless, but his disappointment led him to say to his fellows : " Let us also go, that we may die with Him " ; and this is surely the kind of faith that Jesus demands from His followers to-day. Not the faith that will lead a forlorn hope to the cannon's mouth, but the faith that will say, with Thomas of old, " Let us also go that we may die with Him."

Now the difference between Christ's ideal and that of the Pharisees was not so much the end in view, as the means towards that end. The end that the Pharisees had in view was a " Kingdom of God," and it would be a gross injustice to the Pharisees, to suppose that it was a political kingdom, pure and simple, without anything ethical or spiritual about it. It was to be a Kingdom of Righteousness, Justice and Truth : a Kingdom in which the Law of God would be universally respected and obeyed. The end was noble, but it was to be achieved by the sword.

Christ's " Kingdom of God " was very similar. It was to be a Kingdom of Universal Righteousness and Love. But Love was to be the only weapon used in its establishment. And so these two " Ideals " came into collision, and the result was the Crucifixion.

Do not imagine for a moment that the Crucifixion was the result of the clash of evil with good, of right with wrong. It was the result of the clash of two ideals—both of them high ; both of them magnificent ; but absolutely irreconcilable. Many years ago I heard William Littleboy exclaim : " People say that the world crucified Christ. It was not the world, it was the Church." And so it was. Christ was crucified by the most religious and earnest men of His day. And history has repeated itself. Once again the two ideals have come into collision. On the one hand there is the

ideal so nobly held by the Pharisees—an heroic national patriotism ; bravely fighting for our country and for the religion of our fathers. And on the other hand, the Christ Ideal of Love at any price, even at the price of the Cross. And once again, the Christ Ideal has been utterly defeated. Jesus has been crucified afresh, and that, not by the world, but by the Church !

And now let us consider the question which of these two ideals is really the higher. Let us put all prejudice and pre-conceived opinion on one side. The fact that the Churches have rejected the Christ Ideal does not necessarily mean that the Christ Ideal is the higher, though some of us might regard it as presumptive evidence pointing in that direction. Probably what will help us most to come to a right conclusion is to ask ourselves the question : which of these two ideals is the more difficult of attainment ? Which requires the greater heroism ? To smite with the sword, even in a forlorn hope, amidst the applause of our friends and the respect of our enemies ; or to hang on the Cross, amidst the scorn and execration of friends and enemies alike, and to pray, “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ” ?

And if we have made up our minds which is the higher ideal, then comes the question : Which ideal has been ours ? Have we, however unconsciously, been among the pious throng, crying, “ Crucify Him, crucify Him.” or have we been saying with the doubting Thomas, “ Let us also go that we may die with Him ” ? But whatever may have been our attitude in the past, the future is still before us, and the Christ Ideal still claims our loyalty. And if we have realised but a hundredth part of the Beauty of Christ’s Holiness and the Glory of His Sacrifice, we shall feel that it were better to follow the Master to defeat and to death, rather than follow any other leader to victory and endless joy.

CHAPTER IX

CHRISTIANITY AND WAR

AT the World's Great Conference of Religions held some years ago at Chicago, a heathen speaker is reported to have said that they all loved our Christ, but that they did not want our Christianity ; and these words seem to me to express what must be the feeling of thousands of thoughtful pagans all the world over. They had need love our Christ, and alas ! they have almost equal reason to abhor our Christianity. But if we take Christianity to mean, not the creeds and customs of Christendom, but the spirit of our Lord's life and teaching, then I say, without the shadow of a doubt, that no man can read the four gospels with an unprejudiced mind without coming to the conclusion that Christianity and War are diametrically opposed and absolutely irreconcilable.

Take, for example, the summary of our Lord's teaching given in the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon begins with the beautitudes, and the qualities there singled out for special commendation are such as would absolutely disqualify a man from being a good soldier. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers, the persecuted. These are not qualities such as we should ever think of ascribing to a Cæsar, an Alexander, or a Napoleon Bonaparte ; or even to a Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener or General French.

Then our Lord goes on further to elaborate His

teaching and to show that it was in no wise opposed to that of the prophets who went before Him ; but that, on the contrary, it brought forward the teaching of those prophets to its logical conclusion.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." That is to say, to fill full, to complete. And the whole of the rest of the chapter is devoted to examples of this fulfilment or completion. Let us take two of the examples given.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Such was the ethical standard of that day ; nor must we forget, if we are rightly to understand our Lord's argument, that it was a higher ethical standard than that of more primitive times, when the law of revenge knew no such definite limitations. Of course in very early times the law of revenge knew no limits whatever save only the limits of possibilities. A man would revenge himself to the utmost of his power. Then came the Law, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." A man must not revenge himself to a greater extent than that to which he had been wronged. This "Lex Talionis" is contained in the Mosaic Dispensation, but in reality is far older than that, for we find it in the code of Hammurabi, the oldest code of laws that has been discovered. Then came the fulfilment, or completion : "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil."

This command of Jesus has given rise to the unfortunate expression, "the doctrine of non-resistance." But the true Christian position is not merely that of non-resistance. It is not a negative position at all. It is the resistance of evil with good—hatred with love. It is much more than "Peace at any price." It is "Love at any price." Even at the price of the Cross.

Our Lord goes on further to exemplify His meaning in order that no one could possibly misunderstand Him unless wilfully. "But whosoever shall smite Thee on the one cheek turn to him the other also." That then is what our Lord meant by non-resistance of evil.

Then, again, a little later on in the same sermon : "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy." Here, again, we see revealed, the ethical standard of that day. Again we must remember, if we are rightly to understand our Lord's argument, that it was a higher ethical standard than that of more primitive times, when every man's hand was against every man. But perhaps it was not such a long step forward as might at first appear. It simply meant that a man was to love those of his own tribe and his own religion. It was our Lord's parable of the Good Samaritan which extended the meaning of the word "neighbour," until it has come to mean anyone to whom we can be of service, or to whom we can do a kindly deed. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.' But I say unto you," and here comes in the fulfilment, or completion, "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

And then our Lord goes on to give a most striking reason why we should love our enemies : "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, for He maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust." And if God, our Heavenly Father, thus showers His beneficence upon friend and enemy alike, who are we, forsooth, that we should be so much more discriminating ? Moreover, He adds, "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? Do not even the publicans so ?" And finally, in conclusion,

"Be ye therefore perfect." Why? "Because your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." With such a parentage it surely behoves us to show some signs of family resemblance. "*Noblesse oblige*." So we see that the whole of Christ's argument rests upon the Universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Nor could I wish that my own argument should rest upon any better foundation.

Now I have often heard it argued that such passages of Scripture were never intended to be taken literally. But I do not ask that they should be taken literally. Take them metaphorically. Take them spiritually. I care not how they are taken. Twist them and turn them as you will. In order to make such teaching harmonise with war, you must call white, black; and light, Egyptian darkness.

Then, again, I am quite willing to admit that if these were isolated texts, and out of harmony with the rest of Christ's teaching, they would prove nothing. You can prove anything you like by the misapplication of isolated texts. But I would submit it to your judgment, and I do so with absolute confidence, that these are not isolated texts, they are perfectly characteristic extracts from the teaching of Jesus. In them there breathes the very spirit of the Master, whose whole life was in perfect harmony with that which He taught. Thus He Himself refused the help of physical force when that help was available, and, apparently, much to be desired. For example, when Simon Peter drew his sword and smote the servant of the High Priest, striking off his ear, our Lord rebuked him with the words, "Put up thy sword in its place, for they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Yet the action of Peter was bold in the extreme, and if ever the use of the sword was justifiable it was justified then. Was the sword ever drawn in a nobler cause than that of protecting our

Lord and Master ? Yet the bold protector of his Master and ours received only a rebuke : " Put up thy sword into its place." Its place then was the scabbard, and if its proper place was the scabbard then, it could never again have any other proper place amongst the professing followers of the Prince of Peace.

Then, again, on another occasion, when two of the disciples, one of them the gentlest and most lovable of all, sought to call down fire from Heaven to consume a Samaritan village which had refused to entertain the Master, the suggestion met with a rebuke remarkable for its severity : " Ye know not what spirit ye are of." Two thousand years have passed away since then, and still the professing followers of the Prince of Peace call for fire and sword to consume their so-called enemies. Alas ! that their ears are so dull of hearing, else surely they would hear the stern rebuke of the Master, " Ye know not what spirit ye are of."

I have often heard it argued that if our Lord had intended to forbid war He would have forbidden it more explicitly. But such was never His method. He did not come into the world in order to introduce a new code of laws which should supplement or supplant the old. He came rather to offer for our acceptance a spirit of love and universal brotherhood which should render any such code of laws absolutely unnecessary. And thus it was that when George Fox was asked to join the Parliamentary army he did not answer, as he might have done, that any such course of action was forbidden by Scripture, though I think that this answer might well have been defended by a far less able advocate than George Fox. But his answer was deeper and more far-reaching than that. He lived, he said, " in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all war." And truly, to such as live in the virtue of the life and power of Jesus Christ, war is, and must be, impossible.

Nothing could better exemplify the weakness of the position occupied by professing Christians who seek to defend war than the arguments which they bring forward in its support. Such arguments are, for the most part, arguments of expediency, but four passages are constantly referred to from the New Testament. Let us therefore consider them :

(1) On one occasion our Lord made a scourge of small cords and drove the traders from the temple. Was not this, I have often been asked, the use of physical force ? Well ! was it ? I know of no reason for supposing that physically our Lord was any stronger than you or I. At the time when this happened, the outer court of the temple had become a vast market-place, and the buyers and sellers had all the force of law and custom on their side. If you or I were to make a scourge of small cords and were to seek to clear a vast market-place, would the consequences be to any degree comparable ? Of course they would not, and surely it follows that the force used was not physical, but moral force. Scholars tell us that in the original it is quite clear that the scourge of small cords was intended to drive out the cattle. It was not intended for the buyers and sellers. It is in the Fourth Gospel alone that either the cattle or the scourge of small cords are mentioned.

(2) Our Lord once said : " There shall be wars and rumours of wars, and the end is not yet." Here our Lord makes a simple prediction ; a prediction all too amply verified by subsequent history. It would have been equally true had He said there shall be lies and rumours of lies, and the end is not yet ; but we should not on that account have condoned lying. Or He might have said, with equal truth, there shall be murders and rumours of murders, and the end is not yet ; but we should not on that account have exonerated the murderer.

(3) On another occasion our Lord said : " Think not that I came to send peace on the earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword." Here, again, our Lord makes a simple prediction, this time concerning what the effect of His coming would be. The bringing of the sword was to be the consequence, not the reason, of His coming. No one in his senses would argue that the reason of our Lord's coming was to bring the sword. In the Bible (as in other Eastern writings) cause and effect are never clearly distinguished. The effect is often spoken of as though it were the cause, as, for example, when our Lord's miracles are said to have been performed in order that prophecy might be fulfilled. Moreover, if this text is to be used to justify war, it must equally be used to justify family quarrels. For our Lord goes on to say, " For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

(4) Lastly, our Lord once said : " He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." On this occasion, as on so many others, the disciples understood literally the metaphorical language of Jesus, and one of them eagerly suggests to Him, " Lord, here are two swords," whereon our Lord sadly answered, " It is enough." It is enough ! Two swords amongst twelve men surrounded by bitterly hostile enemies. Could any language have been more obviously ironical ? Yet, notwithstanding the obvious irony of our Lord's reply, some of the disciples seem actually to have provided themselves with swords in consequence of what He said, and one of them, Peter, used his sword, bringing upon himself the stern rebuke of the Master, to which I have already referred. Surely it is obvious that if these words of Jesus are to be taken as a literal command they

are absolutely out of harmony with all the rest of His teaching. I know of no instance more flagrant or more deplorable of an isolated text of Scripture being constantly used to prove what is obviously untrue.

“But,” some will say, “how about the wars of the Jews? Surely they were directly ordained by God?” Well! We live in the twentieth century, when the higher criticism and the theory of evolution have alike become orthodox. And in such an age I think that this argument should scarcely need refutation. Surely it is obvious that in the Old Testament we have the teaching of Jesus in process of evolution. The Apostle Paul clearly recognises this fact when he says: “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.” I well remember, when I was at school, we used to be taught that the word here translated schoolmaster, is the Greek word, “paidagogos,” and that the paidagogos was not really the schoolmaster, but the Greek slave whose duty it was to take the child to school. And if this be true, then, obviously, the thought in the apostle’s mind was that Christ Himself was the schoolmaster, and that it was the glorious function of the law to lead the Children of Israel to Him. But however this may be, it is obvious that the Apostle Paul clearly recognises the fact that the teaching of Jesus does not stand alone, but forms the consummation of an evolution of religious thought. Indeed, Christ Himself recognises this when He says: “I came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them”; to fill them full. And, this being so, then to go back for our ethical precedents to the Old Testament is much as though a modern chemist were to hark back upon the authority of the alchemists upon a question of organic chemistry. The thing is absurd on the face of it, and by so doing we do not only justify war; we justify the most appalling massacres; we justify slavery: we justify bigamy; we justify polygamy; we

even justify polytheism. We justify hundreds of things which even the most earnest advocate for war would scarcely wish to justify. In short, the argument proves too much.

But, even in the Old Testament, the most inspired of the prophets looked forward to a time when war should cease. Not only so, but they looked forward to it as an ideal to be striven after, a consummation devoutly to be wished. Thus the prophets, Isaiah and Micah, alike speak of a time when "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not rise against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

It is very interesting to find Irenaeus and Justin Martyr, two early Christians who wrote towards the close of the second century, speak of these prophecies of our Lord as having been fulfilled in their own day by the fact that Christians of their day refused to carry arms. Well was it for them that they lived in the second century and not in the twentieth!

And this leads me on very naturally to consider the question in what light they regarded the teachings of Jesus on the question of war, who lived nearest His time? For surely those who lived nearest the time of our Lord were in a specially favourable position for understanding His real meaning on such a point.

Now, in the first place, I need scarcely point out the fact that the teaching of the apostles was just as pacific as was that of their Master. Thus James, our Lord's brother, writes: "Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of the lusts that war in your members?"

Then, again, the Apostle Paul writes: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

And, again, how full are the writings of the Apostle John of this spirit of love and universal brotherhood.

But far more explicit testimony is to be found when we come to study the customs of the early Christians. For there is not the slightest doubt that for the first two centuries of our era Christians consistently refused to carry arms, and when a soldier became converted to Christianity, as a matter of course he left the army. Many suffered martyrdom for this very cause, such as Maximilian, and Marcellus, and Cassian, and all alleged as an all-sufficient reason for their refusal to bear arms, "I am a Christian and therefore I cannot fight." Scholars tell us that over and over again do these words recur in the records of the early Christians, "I am a Christian, and therefore I cannot fight."

It is very interesting to find these early Christians refuting exactly the same arguments in favour of war that we have to refute to-day. And they did it, as I have attempted to do it, by reference to the Sermon on the Mount, and to incidents in the life of our Lord. Thus Tertullian, writing towards the close of the second century, says : "When Christ disarmed Peter, he disarmed every soldier."

And now let us consider whether the use of physical force is ever lawful to the Christian ; and, if so, what are the limits of its lawfulness.

I suppose that followers of Tolstoy would answer the question by saying that the use of physical force is never lawful to the Christian, and this is a simple solution to the problem. But it is not a solution which I myself am able to adopt.

Thus we make use of physical force to restrain persons of unsound mind, and they themselves, when they are recovered from their malady, are often the first to thank us for what we have done. It is our solicitude for their welfare which thus causes us to bring physical

force to bear. Surely, such uses of physical force must be in harmony with the spirit of our Lord's teaching.

In discussing this question as to the legitimate uses of physical force, a great deal has been said concerning the similarity of the soldier and the policeman. But between these two officials there is this obvious distinction: That the work of the policeman in an ideal community would be done for the benefit of the person upon whom physical force is brought to bear; while, in the work of the soldier, the benefit of the individual must, of necessity, be lost sight of. Now do not misunderstand me. Do not imagine for one moment that I am seeking to defend our present methods of dealing with criminals, or that I fondly imagine those methods to be in harmony with the teachings of our Lord. All I assert is the possibility that they may become so, and the fact that we may with reason look forward to a time when the object of our criminal law shall be no longer merely the protection of society, but rather the reformation of the criminal, and his well-being.

And now we are in a position to define exactly within what limits the use of physical force is lawful to the Christian. It is lawful only so far as it is absolutely necessary for the well-being of the individual upon whom physical force is brought to bear. Whenever the well-being of that individual is lost sight of, the use of physical force becomes at once unlawful and un-Christian.

I have often heard it asserted that in the great war the Allies were acting as the Policemen of Europe to maintain law and order. But one thing upon which our Lord laid great emphasis was the infinite value of each individual. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Fear not therefore ; ye are of more value than many sparrows." Every individual, being a child of our Heavenly Father, must be equally the recipient of His love, and of infinite value in His sight. But even apart from such high idealism how senseless was this slaughter ! The men whom we have been mowing down like grass were not the German War Lords. They were for the most part simple, kindly folk like ourselves, and, equally with ourselves, children of an All-Loving Father in Heaven.

And now I must leave the question of the lawfulness of war and go on to consider the question of its expediency. And here I feel bound to confess that I approach the subject with a very prejudiced mind. I cannot help doing so for the simple reason that I have faith to believe that which is right must, in the end, prove to be that which is wise ; whilst that which is wrong must, in the end, prove to be that which is foolish. It is only our shortsightedness which leads us to think otherwise. Indeed to believe that that which is wrong is expedient, seems to me to be atheism pure and simple. And war is atheism. We say " I believe in God the Father Almighty." But if we really believed in Him, why our Army ? Why our Dreadnoughts ? Why our Allies ? We often sing " Sufficient is Thine Arm alone, and our defence is sure," but to take such words upon our lips is little better than canting hypocrisy. You may answer me, as many have done, that " God helps those who help themselves." But so might argue the thief who robs us of our goods. It is one thing to do right, and to trust God to help us. It is quite another thing to do wrong in order, as we think, to help God. God does not ask such help as that.

But notwithstanding my prejudice, it shall be my endeavour to take as broad a view of the question of expediency as I can.

Many will remember the wave of materialism that

swept over England forty-five years ago when I was a boy. At that time Darwin had just published his greatest work, *The Origin of Species*. Tyndall, Huxley, and Herbert Spencer were at the height of their intellectual power, and they had so rounded off the materialistic theory of the universe that it seemed impregnable.

I have no wish to say a word against the great scientists whose names I have mentioned. Much of the work that they did will last for ever, and we owe to them a deep debt of gratitude which we can only acknowledge but never repay. Yet the materialistic theory for which they stood is a thing of the past, and is scarcely held by any responsible scientist of the present day. Is it not strange that after the materialistic position has been given up by all the scientists of repute, in the practical affairs of politics gross materialism should still hold undisputed sway, and that moreover with the full approbation of the churches !

And now let us consider in what relationship does war stand to this great law of the survival of the fittest. It is easy to imagine that under very primitive conditions war might tend towards progress. The weak and unhealthy might be killed off by the strong and virile. The unintelligent might be killed off by the more intelligent. The selfish might be killed off by the altruistic, whose willingness to co-operate with others, would of course put them into a position of great advantage. This might hold good under very primitive conditions indeed. Probably it did not, in any large degree, but conceivably it might have done. But, however that may have been, *civilised* warfare chooses the very best for death and destruction, leaving the worst to repeople the earth with their offspring. What would happen on a stock-farm, if the very beasts were killed for food, and only the poorest were kept for breeding

purposes? The farmer who acted thus would soon reap the harvest of his folly. And this is a true picture of what is actually happening in Europe to-day. It has happened in every military empire that has ever existed. It happened in Assyria three thousand years ago; and when the best and bravest Assyrians were killed off, the Assyrians were bred from the weak and cowardly, and then Assyria fell, to be replaced by the Empire of Babylon. Then the same thing happened there and Babylon gave place to Persia and Persia to Greece, and Greece to Rome; in later times the same thing happened to Spain and France. It has been calculated that four million men were killed during the Napoleonic Wars, and they the *élite* of Europe. More than half of them were Frenchmen, and France was re-peopled by men of shorter stature, poorer physique, less courage, less intelligence and less virility. France was thus impoverished, not only by those who were slain, but by their children and their children's children, who might have been, but were not. No military nation has ever long survived. How could it? War is race suicide, because it reverses the law of the survival of the fittest, and breeds from the least fit.

I well remember, more than thirty years ago, visiting the Valley of Aosta. At that time one could not help but notice the great number of miserable, cretinous imbeciles who inhabited that valley: men and women, human in form, yet lacking all the dignity of manhood, and even the intelligence of the lower animals. For centuries the intelligent peasantry of the Valley of Aosta had been conscripted for the Austrian Army. Only those who suffered from goitre were allowed to follow the plough, and to repeople the Valley with their children. The law of the survival of the fittest was reversed, and the Valley was re-peopled by the least fit. And thus does war, like an awful ogre, tend to

rob the human race of all that is divine, degrading God's noblest work far beneath the level of His brute creation.

And now, having shown that civilised warfare tends towards devolution, by leaving the least fit to propagate the race, let me go on to illustrate the fact that peace must ever tend to preserve the virility of a nation.

Nothing is to me more striking than the survival of the Jew. For three thousand years, whilst the great military Empires of the World have successively risen and then rotted in decay, the Jew has survived ; and he has survived, not because he has been cleverer than his neighbours, but simply because he has been more moral. Indeed the Jews are still the most moral race under the sun, their ideal of home life and their sense of parental responsibility being far higher than ours. Thus the infantile mortality amongst the poor Jews in my own city is scarcely half as great as it is amongst the poor " Christians."

One could scarcely have a more striking illustration of the fact that moral and spiritual forces are stronger than physical forces and in the end must prevail. It is not force of arms but force of righteousness that truly exalteth a nation.

When the Act for the feeding of school children first came into operation, I was told by the Medical Officer of our Education Department in Manchester, that when he went through the poorer Jewish schools, in order to pick out the underfed children so that they might be fed from the rates, he could not find one.

There are not two kinds of truth—religious truth and scientific truth. All truth is one, and when Christ taught the doctrine of non-resistance and love at any price, He taught not only the highest religion, but the most profound science.

If a nation were wise and cared for its existence, it would not fight for it. It would refuse to fight.

But it may be objected that the Jews, with all their virtues, did not adopt the attitude of non-resistance, so that I have not yet proved war to be inexpedient and unnecessary. Well, I will proceed to do so.

In the year 1681, William Penn and a handful of Quakers founded the Colony of Pennsylvania. All around them the white man was at war with the Indian, whose tomahawk and scalping knife carried terror and death and destruction into all the surrounding colonies. Surely Penn's "holy experiment" could not have been tried under circumstances more prejudicial to its success.

Notwithstanding this, however, Penn and his companions landed unarmed, and, from the very first, treated the Indians with Christian kindness and loving forbearance. The land, though it had already been given them by the English monarch, they obtained again by treaty from the Indians themselves, whom they considered to be the real owners of the soil; a treaty which was described by Voltaire as the only treaty that was ever made without an oath, and the only treaty that was ever kept.

For seventy long years the Colony remained under Quaker rule, depending for its safety upon the absence of all the usual means of protection. And what was the consequence of this "hare-brained folly"?—for that was what it was called by the worldly-wise contemporaries of William Penn.

The consequence was that during the whole of those seventy years, whilst blood flowed like water in the surrounding states, not one single drop of Christian blood was shed by the Indians in the colony of Pennsylvania.

Now I have heard the importance of this historical fact discounted on the score that it was entirely exceptional. And truly exceptional it was. But where did

the exception lie ? Surely the exception lay here, that this is the only instance recorded in history of the principles of Christ having been tried on a large political scale. Surely no one will argue that the exception lay here, that God protected those who put their trust in Him ! Nay, I can bring forward evidence on a much smaller scale to prove to you that the exception did not lie there. For example, in the other States of North America, beside the State of Pennsylvania, the Quakers formed a not inconsiderable proportion of the population ; and they, like their brethren of Pennsylvania, consistently refused to carry arms or to retire to fortified places at moments of extreme peril. They went about their ordinary avocations unarmed and therefore unharmed. During those awful years of bloody warfare with the Indians, only three Friends lost their lives, two men and one woman, and they had lost their faith in peace principles and sought the protection of arms.

The awful rebellion which took place in Ireland towards the close of the eighteenth century, told exactly the same tale. There again, the Quakers consistently refused to carry arms. Not only so, but they incurred the displeasure of both parties in the struggle by never refusing succour to any one who came to them for protection ; whether loyalist or insurgent, none were turned away. And what was the consequence ? Terrible were the sufferings of Irish Friends during that awful time of bloody rebellion, but only one Friend lost his life, and he was a young man who had assumed regiments and arms.

Then again one might mention the case of Luxemburg which was absolutely defenceless, and compare it with Belgium, which was so fully armed and so bravely defended.

This certainly seems to show that an undefended

State may be safer than one that is well protected. But the defenceless condition of Luxemburg was, in a sense, accidental, and therefore the illustration may seem to some unconvincing. Far more striking is the case of the frontier between Canada and the United States.

One hundred years ago the British Government gave orders for the increase of their naval force on the Great Lakes, and there was every prospect of a competition in armaments between the two Governments. But the American Government suggested that instead of pursuing this dangerous policy, the frontier should be left undefended, and, after some hesitation, the British Government agreed. The arrangement was ratified in the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817, and the consequence has been a century of unbroken peace.

Whilst the tragedy of the great war may well suffice to expose the folly of the oft-repeated statement "if you want peace, prepare for war," this almost forgotten story of our Canadian frontier may equally well serve to illustrate the obvious fact that if we want peace, we must seek peace and ensue it.

Do not imagine that I bring these cases forward as examples of miraculous protection. There is nothing supernatural in the fact that evil can be overcome by good. Love is the strongest moral and spiritual force in the universe. That love should succeed where hatred failed, was no more supernatural, than it was supernatural in Æsop's fable that the sun should succeed in causing the traveller to take off his coat, whilst the chilling blast of winter only caused him to wrap it the more closely round him.

There is in every man, however degraded, a spark of divinity; a best which cannot fail to respond to that which is best in others.

Be noble ! And the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping but never dead
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own.

Now I have spent a great deal of valuable time in the endeavour to show you that War is not only unlawful, but also inexpedient and unnecessary. This I have done because, when arguing with my fellow Christians, I have always found that they love most to dwell on arguments of expediency. Some will candidly admit that War and Christianity cannot possibly be reconciled. Of course they cannot. But, they add, with strange inconsistency, "the teaching of Jesus is absolutely impracticable at the present time." Their position has been well expressed in the couplet :

But loving all men, clearly is deferred
Till all men love each other.

But such was not the position of the early Christians, who, as we have already seen, willingly sacrificed all that they had, and life itself, for the peace principles of their Master. And are we, who live in the twentieth century, going to make expediency the measure of our loyalty to Christ ?

We read in the third chapter of the Book of Daniel, that when King Nebuchadnezzar threatened Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego with the raging fiery furnace if they refused to bow down and worship the golden image which he had set up, their answer was that they had faith to believe that their God, Jehovah, could and would deliver them : "but," they added, "if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

That is to say, even if Jehovah proved less strong than the gods of the Babylonians, or if He proved unwilling or unable to do that which they expected of Him, come weal or woe, they would be loyal to Jehovah.

Alas ! that the Prince of Peace has so few followers whose loyalty is of this robust type. Alas ! that there are so few who realise the fact that :

Because right is right, to follow right,
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.

I am often amazed at what appears to me the gross and glaring inconsistency of professing Christians on the subject of War. When one sees the late Pope of Rome standing, as he himself described it, "like Moses," to bless the Spanish troops as they proceeded to their work of blood and desolation in the Island of Cuba, or when one sees our own Bishops blessing our ironclads and other engines of devastation and the destruction of life, one may well exclaim : "What strange representatives of the Prince of Peace !" But it would be very unfair to speak as though the dignataries of the Roman and Anglican communities were the only ones that displayed this inconsistency. Equally with them the members of the Nonconformist Churches have flung to the winds their loyalty to their Master !

What should we think of a soldier of King George who was perfectly loyal in times of peace, but changed his colours in time of war ? Yet that is a true picture of the professing followers of Jesus Christ to-day. They cry "Peace, peace," when there is peace ; and nothing is easier and nothing more futile ; but as soon as war breaks out they at once become worshippers of Mars or Moloch.

Oh ! that the Churches may return to their allegiance to their Lord ere it be too late ; ere the irrevocable sentence be passed upon them, which was passed upon the chosen people of old : "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you ; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear ! Your hands are full of blood."

And now, in conclusion, let me say emphatically

that the Christian ideal of universal peace is not the mere absence of War. It is the full and practical recognition of the Universal Fatherhood of God and the Universal Brotherhood of Man. It is the full and practical application of the Spirit of Christ's Sermon on the Mount to all our relationships in life, not excepting our foreign relationships.

To me an armed peace seems little, if at all, less immoral than a condition of actual warfare. The dogs of war are as little in harmony with the Spirit of Christ's life and teaching when they are chained as when they are let loose, and morally, there is but little to choose between England spending her millions in preparation for war, and England spilling her life-blood on the battlefield.

Look at the so-called "Christian" nations of Europe to-day. Where comes in the Universal Fatherhood of God? Where comes in the Universal Brotherhood of Man? Where comes in Christ's Sermon on the Mount? If these things did come in, War would be seen to be as foolish as it is wicked. Rivalry amongst nations would be a rivalry of moral qualities, and patriotism would mean no longer a greed of territory or a lust of gold. Rather would it mean a desire to see one's country standing in the forefront of all the countries in the world, for honour, truth and righteousness.

The Jingo has no monopoly of patriotism. All who serve their country with these noble aims in view are patriotic, even though they recognise the fact that other nations, besides their own, have their rights; and as for their own:

Best they honour thee,
Who honour in thee only what is best.

And this Christian ideal of Universal Peace can be attained in one way, and in one way only, and that is by Christians being loyal to Christ. And if thus loyal to

Him, though they may be called in times of peace, visionaries and dreamers, and in times of war reproached as traitors and lovers of all countries save their own, it matters nothing, for God and time are on their side, and "one with God is a majority."

Dreamer of dreams, we take the taunt in gladness,

Knowing that God, beyond the years you see,

Hath wrought those dreams, that count with you for madness,

Into the substance of the life to be.

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